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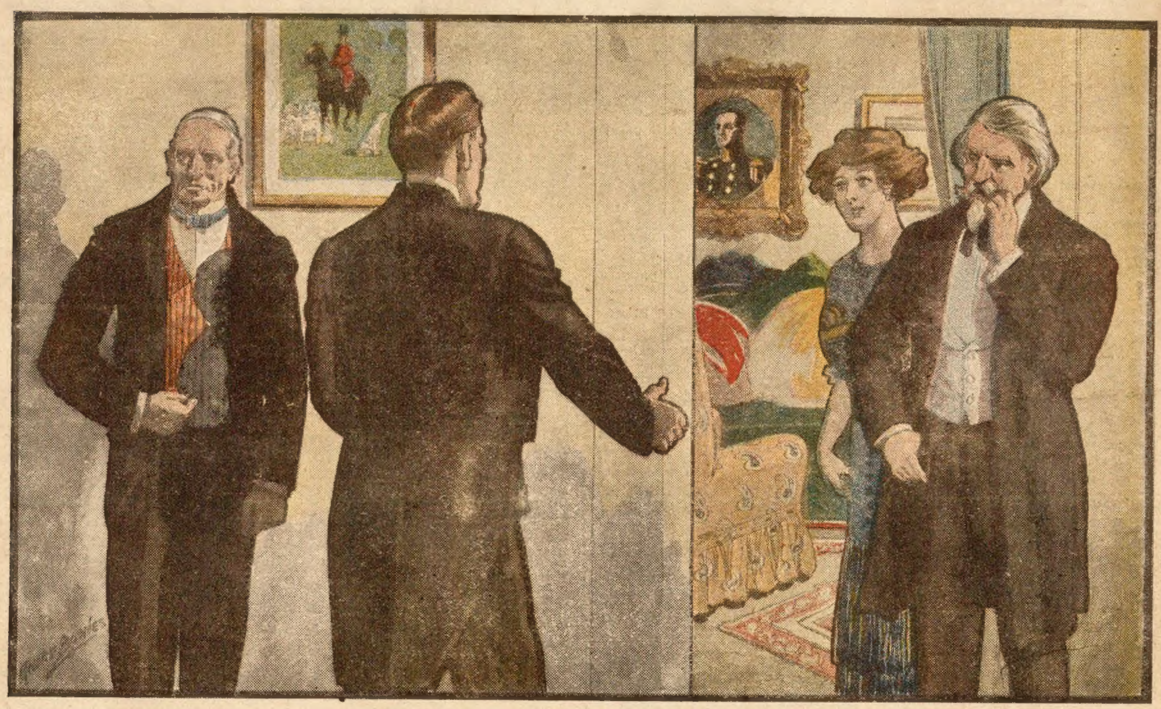
The Vanished Captain

Or, *THE STOLEN RED EYE* ∴∴∴ By FRANK E. CHANNON



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CHAPTER I.

THROUGH "HOOK'S GORGE."

IT WAS a wild and perilous place to be in, for the Potomac was in flood. Rocky Run, Difficult Run, and a dozen other little streams that usually gamboled merrily over their steep beds toward their big sister, now frothed and roared in anger, as they rushed down from the hills around the Vienna neighborhood, and hurled themselves, seething and swirling, into the great river, carrying, as they charged along, all kinds of debris collected from their banks.

At the mouth of Difficult Run a perfect dam had been deposited by the infuriated little stream, but now it had boiled over the resistance of its own making, and was emptying with insane fury into the Potomac, whose bosom, lashed by the biting December wind as it raced out from the east, was a mass of heaving waves, which jostled and wrestled with each other, as they bore down on the bare, steep rocks of "Hook's Gorge," where the rock-bound banks forced them one on top of the other, until the river was a race.

It was an ugly place in which to be caught even in the fairest weather, but now, with the river mad, and the wind in a fury, lashing it unmercifully, it looked next to impossible for any man to come out alive from that boiling caldron.

But look! Surely that was a human head that bobbed up and down like some cork in the race of the river. Now it was swept along with irresistible force, and barely escaped a great jagged rock that stuck out defiantly from the confusion. Now it was spun around like a top, and backed into a swirling eddy, where it circled around with giddy speed. Now, caught by some undercurrent, it shot out again, and was off at sickening pace down the gorge. For a brief second a pair of broad shoulders, red with the sting of the wind and the bite of the water, gleamed on either side of the bobbing head, and a muscular arm shot out with skilful side stroke, to avoid a projecting rock.

The swimmer, whoever he was, was fighting a cool, level-headed, strong fight. He was making no attempt to combat the racing river, but contenting himself with a stroke here or there, where his keen eyes told him danger lurked. "Sandy Landing," with its safe approach, was half a mile below, and if he was able to survive the rapids that bore him along at breakneck pace, and once gain the comparatively calm backwater of that landing, his fight would be won.

Once, twice, and thrice he came perilously close to death, but his good fortune held, and his strong arms and cool head held true. Already the haven of safety loomed before him, and a half-stifled sigh of relief escaped his lips, as his spray-dimmed eyes discovered the first sign of the backwater. Still he permitted the racing river to carry him along unresistingly, confining his efforts simply to avoid being dashed against the bowlders.

But suddenly he made his fight. With a tremendous plunge, he struck off sharply toward the left bank, using a powerful breast stroke. The rapids struck him like the blast from a cyclone, half smothered him, and forcing him on and down, but he gained some water, and with gritted teeth and grim, determined visage, fought gamely on. Once he was turned completely around in some eddy, and spun there, whizzing dizzily for a full five seconds, but he drew out from the grasp of the whirlpool, and forged on again toward the adjacent Sandy Landing.

The river, like some giant defrauded of his prey, ever and again caught him, but each time with less success, until, at last, after a rapid survey of the water, he flung himself on his back, and lay resting, as he floated in the calm reach of the backwater. Only a few seconds repose did he allow himself, for the biting wind and icy waters already commenced to numb his tired limbs, and then, in leisurely fashion, with head and shoulders well out, he forged ahead, and presently felt bottom under him. Struggling to his feet, he waded in toward the beach, and in another minute stood on the shore, safe, but well-nigh exhausted.

He was a young man, eighteen or nineteen at the most, of about the average height, but strongly developed in chest and shoulders. His face was ruddy, despite the chilling effect of the wind; his mouth strong; and his gray eyes looked out keenly from beneath well-marked brows. He was coatless, and his outing shirt had been torn nearly off his body, either by the river or by design. Nothing but socks protected his feet, for he had contrived to kick off his heavy hunting boots, when he first slipped from the treacherous sleet-covered rocks, higher up the Potomac. His bare feet showed in places where the socks had been torn, his hands were cut and bleeding, and from beneath his closely-cropped hair a tiny stream of red was trickling.

"By Jove!" he ejaculated. And then again, "By Jove!"

There was a world of meaning in those two exclamations. He stood looking at the dark, roaring waters beyond the landing for a few seconds, and then, with a half grunt of: "A bally close shave!" he turned and started up the river bank. At first he only limped and crawled along, but gradually, as his strength and breath returned to him, he increased it to a walk, which soon developed into a sharp trot that brought back the circulation in his veins. He was apparently in splendid condition, for in fifteen minutes he was seemingly none the worse for his rough experience, and despite his lack of shoes, which made his going over the rough ground rather difficult, he managed to maintain a very respectable speed. Indeed, when he eased up close to the little hut at Walton's Ferry, with the exception of his appearance, he was none the worse for his ducking. He knocked somewhat loudly upon the rude door of the little shanty, and a gruff voice bade him "Come in."

"Shut that door, you—well, what'n the Old Harry air you bin doin' ter yerself ter git in that fix?" demanded the owner of the voice, as he sat looking at the sudden apparition.

He was a huge man, rough and uncouth-looking, but there were kindly lines around his mouth, and eyes that told of a great heart within that big frame. He sat gazing over the net he was engaged in repairing at the youthful visitor, who, shutting the door, strode up to the stove that occupied nearly a fourth of the shack, and calmly commenced to warm himself.

"What's yer bin doin', I says?" again demanded the big man, still gazing at his visitor, half in amusement, half in concern. "Fell in, did yer?" he continued.

The young man nodded. "Slipped on those confounded rocks just above Difficult. By Jove, I had the quickest ride a fellow can imagine; no guard to take tickets, either," he chuckled.

"How fur did yer go?" inquired the fisherman, catching the contagious grin.

"As far as that landing—what do you call it—Sandy Landing?"

"Well, now, yer don't say?"

"Indeed, I do."

"Better take yer clothes off," suggested the net owner. "I s'pose it weren't none too blamed warm, were it?"

"I wasn't cold until I climbed out, and then only for a minute or so; the run up here has warmed me up considerably," replied the youth, proceeding to discard his tattered garments, which he deposited in convenient nooks about the great stove, whose red sides gave evidence of the roaring fire within. "Say, have you a towel, old man?" he asked, a moment later.

"I ain't an old man," stoutly denied the fisherman, glaring in make-believe wrath at his youthful visitor, "but here's a rag as 'll fit you, I'm thinking." He drew from an old chest a somewhat dirty-looking piece of toweling, and handed it to the young man, who proceeded immediately to rub himself vigorously with it.

"Oh, well, you know," he grunted, as he stopped between his strokes, "I didn't mean that literally; it's simply a term, a term of—of endearment, you know, old chap."

"There you air again," accused the owner of the hut, "callin' me old, when I ain't no more than fifty. You got ter quit it now."

"All serene," agreed his companion, with a gay laugh, as he put the finishing touches to his grooming, his polished body looking red as a lobster's under the vigorous treatment. "Say, old man, have you any togs you can lend me?" he continued, again transgressing.

"I'll see what I can find for you; you sartainly need some badly," and suiting the action to the words, the giant arose, carefully placing the net on one side, while he again fumbled in the old chest, presently producing a pair of corduroy trousers and a woolen sweater that had once been red. "Reckon as that'll hold yer fur a while," he grunted, as he tossed them over, "but yer better git yer feet inside them," and he pointed to a pair of great boots that were pushed under the stove.

"Ah, say, thanks, awfully," acknowledged the recipient, as he proceeded to encase himself in the donated garments and footwear.

The fisherman took out a big pipe, and loading it carefully, stood lolling around as he surveyed the young Englishman, now fearfully and wonderfully gotten up. "Say, ain't you the limit, though?" he blurted out presently. "Ain't you never goin' ter talk 'Merican? Yar you bin 'mong us all summer and part 'er winter, an' yer ain't no better than when yer come yar. I swear, I don't see what's goin' ter be done 'bout yer, Mister Hamilton."

"Don't worry, old man, once an Englishman, always an Englishman, you know; and you can't expect a fellow to forget all he ever knew after six months' exile amongst you people, can you?"

"What's that yer say—'exile?' 'Tain't no exile when you're livin' with yer own uncle, and a mighty fine man he is, too, if he does drink a little more'n as is good fur him. 'Exile' be switched!"

A cloud passed across the face of the young Englishman, as his companion spoke, and for a moment or so he studied the glowing sides of the stove, lost in thought. Then, with an effort, he aroused himself. "I must be going, you know," he said. "Thanks awfully, Ben, for these duds. I'll bring them over in the morning."

"That's all right, that's all right," muttered Ben Oliver; "no hurry 'bout bringin' 'em back. Hope yer don't catch no cold from yer duckin'—'tain't likely, though, fur yer be hard as nails. Good-by."

"So long," responded the young man, as he flung wide the door and swung out into the bitter wind.

"A mighty smart young feller, now—mighty smart, an' real sociable-like, too. 'Tis too bad as the Cap't is such a drinkin' man, it sartinly is," muttered Ben Oliver, as he resumed his seat on the old keg, and again took up the damaged net.

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSING CAPTAIN.

Meanwhile, young Hamilton at a swinging pace was striding through the pine woods that flanked Ben Oliver's cottage, and presently he emerged on the old pike that led him toward the bridge that spanned the Potomac just below the Falls. Across this structure he jogged at a smart clip, and gained the opposite shore in Virginia.

Fifteen minutes' tramping over hill and dale, a crossing of two little streams—no small matter in their swollen condition—and a brisk trot along the new pike brought him to a low-roofed, spreading farmhouse—at least, it had once been such, but at present it formed a residence for Captain Richard Cline Hamilton, late of the Royal Navy, but now a naturalized citizen of the State of Virginia, and uncle to Stamford Bruce Maynard Hamilton, the youth who so lately had experienced such a wonderful escape from the river.

Stamford was humming an air, but he stopped as he entered the house. There was a chill in the roomy hall, but beyond, at the further end, a door slightly ajar permitted a cheery glow to escape through the crack. Placing his borrowed cap upon the hall rack, the young man entered, glancing quickly, almost apprehensively, around as he did so. A low growl of welcome greeted him, and a great, sleek-coated mastiff arose and advanced. On the couch, close to the open fireplace, was stretched at full length an elderly man, with closed eyes; but a slight movement and a slow opening of the bloodshot eyes showed that he was awake. A big spittoon lay on the floor at his side, and on a little table within easy reach of him stood a decanter half filled with whisky; a tumbler, overturned and perilously near the edge of the table, from falling off of which it was only stayed by the butt of a dead cigar, showed only too plainly the occupation of the recumbent man.

Stamford glanced quickly at these signs; there was a look of deep disgust on his face. "Still boozing, uncle?" he inquired, almost sarcastically.

The couch occupant did not reply for a moment, then he muttered wearily: "Aye, and always shall be." He roused himself, as he noted the appearance of his nephew. "Where have you been; what are you doing in those absurd clothes?" he demanded.

"Oh, I got a ducking, and Ben lent me these things to get home in. Hello, Sig! All right, lie down, old boy; it's me. Don't you know the smell of these togs, eh?" This to the great dog, who was making a curious and suspicious inspection of the borrowed clothes.

"Nice weather to take a bath," suggested the uncle, in thick tones. "It was an involuntary one, I presume?"

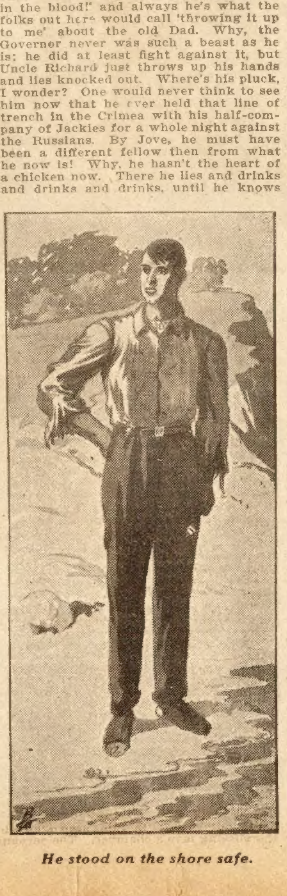
"I'd scarcely go in for pleasure such weather as this, but say, uncle, can't you break off now. You know Mr. and Miss Charrington are coming over tonight—you invited them over a week ago—and you certainly cannot meet them in the condition you are in. What are you going to do?"

"Do? Do?" echoed the Captain, stupidly. "What can I do, boy? You can't, you never will understand it, but your father would, were he living now. It's in the blood, Stamford; there's a—a—a—oh, a devil inside us Hamiltons, and he cries to be satisfied, and always will cry until he kills us. He——"

"Oh, bosh, uncle!" ejaculated the nephew, wheeling about abruptly, and leaving the room, followed leisurely by the great mastiff.

Up the broad stairs leaped Stamford, three steps at a time, Siguford pounding along close at his heels. Through a door at the top he pushed his way into his bedroom, then fell limply into a wicker chair, where, for a few seconds, he sat deep in thought.

"I have no patience with him," he muttered. "It is always the same old excuse: 'I can't help it, I can't help it, it's in the blood!' and always he's what the folks out here would call 'throwing it up to me' about the old Dad. Why, the Governor never was such a beast as he is; he did at least fight against it, but Uncle Richard just throws up his hands and lies knocked out. Where's his pluck, I wonder? One would never think to see him now that he ever held that line of trench in the Crimea with his half-company of Jackies for a whole night against the Russians. By Jove, he must have been a different fellow then from what he now is! Why, he hasn't the heart of a chicken now. There he lies and drinks and drinks and drinks, until he knows nothing and cares less, and what's going to become of him. This coming out here didn't do him a bit of good; all it's done is to make him take his whisky neat instead of putting water with it. He's a beast, that's what he is, and I wish, I wish——" The young man abruptly ceased his soliloquy, and arising, went over to an old-fashioned chest of drawers, from which he took out a white shirt, then throwing open the wardrobe, brought forth a carefully-hung evening suit, which, after changing his underclothes, he proceeded to array himself.



He stood on the shore safe.

It was becoming dusk, and he lit three of the little candles of the elaborate silver candelabra, by which light he completed his preparations. Then, taking up a large, gold half-hunting watch, he thrust it in his pocket, allowing the fob, with its handsome seal, to dangle.

Siguford suddenly bristled up and gave vent to a low growl. The young man glanced quickly around. "What's up?" he demanded. Then, catching the sound of approaching wheels, "By Jove, here they come now, I believe," he muttered.

He glanced out from the window. A two-horse closed carriage, old-fashioned, but roomy and comfortable, was drawing up before the entrance. The negro coachman remained seated in the box, but from the body of the vehicle emerged a tall, white-haired old gentleman, followed by a female figure, bundled up in wraps and closely veiled. There was a clanging of the house bell, and then a shuffling of feet, as Peter, the man of all work, went to answer it. Another moment and Stamford Hamilton was hurrying downstairs, preceded by the mastiff, whose hostile manner had given place to one of welcome and pleasure.

Peter was already receiving the outer garments of the pair. He had lit the lamp in the hall, and its illumination disclosed more plainly the two visitors. The old gentleman was a typical Virginian gentleman of the old school, tall, red-faced, white-haired, and dignified. The lady, who had removed her veil and was now discarding her long cloak, fully sustained the reputation for beauty for which the daughters of the Old Dominion are famous. Dark-haired, dark-eyed, with cheeks that spoke of a life spent in the open air, and a vivacity that is all the American girl's own.

"Good evening Miss Charrington; good evening, sir," greeted the young Englishman, gravely. "I'm afraid you have had a cold drive over; it is a bitter evening."

The young lady bowed and smiled, disclosing a perfect row of little pearly teeth, while the old gentleman extended his hand, and warmly grasped the proffered palm of Stamford Hamilton. "No night is so cold but that the warm welcome from my old friend Hamilton makes amends for it," he replied, gallantly.

From the inner room came a sound of shuffling, and then the crash of an overturned table, with the clink of a broken glass. Stamford moved uneasily, and, standing between his visitors and the sound, flung open the door of the receptionroom on his left, and ushered them in.

A leaping fire was blazing in warm welcome from the deep fireplace. Half a dozen miniature lamps with their red shades cast a pleasant glow over the snug room and its old-fashioned furniture. The feet of the visitors sank deep into the worn, velvety carpet, giving a feeling of comfort and luxury. Old Peter had backed away, and Siguford stood in the doorway, his tail slowly switching from side to side in evident approval.

"Where's the Captain?" demanded Mr. Charrington, glancing around.

It was the one question Stamford was dreading, and his face fell. "He's not feeling so very well tonight; in fact, he's rather under the weather, but if you'll excuse me a moment, I'll look him up; he was resting on the couch when I saw him half an hour ago."

The young man left the room and sought his uncle where he had last seen him, but he was not there; his den was empty. The Captain had evidently sought refuge in the chamber above, and thither in search of him Stamford proceeded. He knocked on the door. There was no reply. Again he rapped, but only silence reigned. From below he could catch the murmur of the Charringtons' voices.

"Uncle, uncle, Mr. Charrington has come. Are you coming down? Shall I come in?" Suiting the action to his words, he tried the door. It was locked. Again he rapped, but from within came no sound. "Are you asleep?" he demanded. Still no reply. Without another moment's hesitation, the young man placed his stalwart shoulder against the door, and by sheer strength forced the frail lock. The door was flung wide by his effort, and he stumbled into the chamber.

A single candle on the far mantelshelf made the darkness appear even darker, but the rapid survey that Stamford gave of the room plainly showed him there was no occupant. The white bed lay as Peter had made it that morning, almost untouched. Only an overturned spittoon, on the rim of which lay the smoldering end of a cigar, gave evidence of late occupancy. In almost a single bound Stamford Hamilton was across the floor. He flung open the door of a large closet and peered in. A disordered array of masculine clothing, a double-barreled shotgun, and a motley collection of boots and shoes rewarded his search. Puzzled, he peered around. Not a soul was there. The room was empty.

"Where, the dickens, can he be?" ejaculated the young man. And how, in thunder, did the door get locked if he isn't inside? He can't be far away, for I distinctly heard him moving in his den when the Charringtons came. He must have come upstairs—who else would have locked the door? Hello, uncle! Uncle where are you?" he called quite loudly, gazing in puzzled manner about him.

There was a sound of soft footsteps in the hall outside, and next moment Peter's form appeared in the doorway. "Hain't the Captain 'ere, sir?" he inquired.

"No, I don't see him anywhere. Do you know where he can have gone, Peter?"

"No, sir; 'e came hup 'ere, sir, less than five minutes ago. Hi saw 'im come hup and hout hof 'is study, sir. Let me look about, sir," and the old servant made a hasty search, meeting with no success, however.

"Well, Hi'll be blowed!" he exclaimed, losing for once, in the surprise of the moment, his usual British butler manner.

"It's a jolly rum go," agreed Stamford. "Are you certain, Peter, that you saw him come upstairs; I thought I did."

"Yes, sir, I certainly did see the Captain come hup 'ere; 'e was a little, if you'll pardon me a-saying it, sir, in 'is cups, for I noticed as 'e staggered again' the wall some, which it ain't much like 'im to do, even when 'e's a-drinking."

"Oh, well, he must be somewhere around. Look him up and tell him Judge Charrington and Miss Charrington are here. Go all through the house, and outside; and—and, Peter, when you find him, er—come and tell me first, you understand?"

"Yes, sir, Hi understand."

Still the butler did not go.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" demanded Stamford. "Why don't you look the Captain up?"

"Yes, sir, Hi'm a-going to do sir," answered the man, as he backed toward the door. He hesitated a moment there, then blurted out: "'Tis hodd—hodd, hain't it, Master Stamford—that his, I means, I wonder where the Captain can be, considering as 'is door was locked, as you say, sir?"

"Well, it's no use bothering about that. Hunt him up, and be sure you tell me when you find him. Call me from the receptionroom, you understand?"

"Yes, sir," and the man turned and went, his inscrutable British face expressing more wonder than it had for years.

It was a problem beyond Peter's reasoning. He had seen the Captain come upstairs; had heard him lock himself in, and now, five minutes later, the room was empty, with the door still locked and the key on the inside. Not quite so stupid as his expressionless features would lead an observer to surmise, the worthy servant had noted that the two windows of the chamber were both closed and bolted. There was no other exit but by these two windows and the locked door, unless one counted in the chimney from the open fireplace, and up that sooty aperture Peter felt certain the Captain would never have climbed.

Where, then, where, by all that went to make up the laws of the universe, had vanished Captain Richard Cline Hamilton?

CHAPTER III.

THE CAPTAIN'S WARDROBE.

The disappearance might well have puzzled a shrewder head than that belonging to Peter Knox, the English butler, and when, half an hour later, he appeared at the entrance to the receptionroom, and with chalky face and trembling finger, beckoned to Stamford Hamilton, his mind was in a perfect whirlwind of confusion. He had hunted everywhere he thought it possible his master might be, but to no purpose. The house was by no means a large one, and after satisfying himself that the inebriated Captain was not within, he had braved the inclement weather, and wandered, half-dazed by the turn events had taken, around and around the old house, searching in hen house and pig shed, in carriage house and stable, in barn and spring house, even half sliding at the risk of a broken leg down the steep hill that led to the spring.

To the old man the disappearance was far more puzzling than to Stamford, for, although he had not mentioned the fact to his young master, he had remained in the hall the entire period from the moment he watched the ex-naval officer stagger upstairs until the nephew had gone in search of him. From that position he commanded an unrestricted view of the exits, and to his certain knowledge the Captain had not again descended. Yet, he was not upstairs; the door of his room had been found locked on the inside, and the butler's own eyes had observed that the two windows were also latched from the interior. Small wonder, then, that Peter's face expressed some concern, and that he stammered and stuttered, as he whispered in young Stamford's ear: "The Captain hain't nowhere, sir; 'is 'ats is hall in the 'all, sir, and so's 'is greatcoat, and I made so bold, Master Stamford, to look in 'is wardrobe, and hall 'is things wot 'e always wears is there, sir, and—and—and w'ere can 'e be, sir?"

"Oh, rot! Of course, he's somewhere about!" exclaimed Stamford. "He's probably not feeling well, and has crawled off somewhere to get out of the way," thought the young man. Then, noticing that his conversation with the butler had attracted the attention of Mr. Charrington, he vouchsafed some explanation. "I can't locate the Captain, you know," he explained, with a nervous laugh. "He was here when you arrived, for I heard him in his den, and concluded he had gone up to his room; in fact, to tell the truth, he appeared to have done so, for I found the door locked, but when I went in, he was not there. He must have gone out to get a little fresh air; he's been in the house all day, but——"

"He'll find plenty of that article outside tonight," Mr. Charrington assured, with a laugh. Then, noticing the butler's scared-looking features: "What's the trouble, Peter? You look as if you had seen the devil," he continued.

"No, sir, Hi hain't seen 'im," hastily disclaimed the butler. "Hi means as Hi hain't seen the Captain," he added, by way of explanation.

"Never fear, Peter; he'll be on hand shortly," replied Judge Charrington.

Now, for the first time, the old gentleman's daughter spoke, addressing her query to young Stamford: "Can't you really find him, Mr. Hamilton? It is remarkable that he should choose such a bad night in which to go out, don't you think so?" Her tone might almost have implied a discourtesy was intended, and Stamford hastened to say: "Oh, he's not far away, Miss Irene; he knew you were coming, you know. In fact, I rather think he heard your arrival, and that he slipped out somewhere to freshen up." Stamford stopped, hesitating, and glanced at the elder man, who, knowing somewhat of his friend's weakness, nodded and smiled, reassuringly.

"If you wish to hunt him up, by all means do so, my boy; Miss Irene will, I am sure, excuse your absence," he said.

"Oh, most certainly," agreed the young lady, and taking advantage of his permission, young Hamilton withdrew, and joined with the frightened Peter in a thorough search for the lost Captain. But the longer he searched, the greater became the puzzle.

"Look, sir!" cried the butler, pointing to the hall rack, "Hall 'is things is 'ere, sir; there's 'is cap, wot 'e always uses w'en 'e's going out hon the grounds, and there's 'is bowler, sir," pointing to a brown Derby, "and 'is slouch 'at, sir," now pointing to a black crash hat, "and 'is greatcoat, sir, and 'is tan 'un—'e never would 'ave gone hout hon such a night bare 'eaded and no coat, would 'e, sir?"

Stamford was silent, thinking for a full minute, as the butler stopped. Then he inquired: "Let's see, Peter, what suit was he wearing; I didn't notice when I came in?"

"The navy blue, sir, wot 'e always wears w'en 'e's knocking about the 'ouse of late, 'e is——"

"The navy blue!" exclaimed Stamford, looking aghast at the butler. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir, Hi ham. Why, if Hi may make so bold has to ask?"

"Why?" echoed Stamford. Why? Why, because I saw that suit rolled up and bowled underneath the bed when I was up there a few minutes ago; it looked as if it had been fired there from a cannon. I pulled it out and looked at it, but I knew the Captain was none too tidy, and I thought you hadn't noticed it. Come upstairs. What are you standing there like an ass for?"

"Beg pardon, sir, Hi hain't a-standing like a hass, sir. Hi means, Hi hain't a-standing 'ere like a hass, sir, but Hi was that taken aback when you said that, sir."

"Follow me upstairs," reiterated Stamford, and he leaped up, followed by the butler, whose face had gone a deadly white.

The candle was still burning, and seizing it, young Stamford darted over to the far side of the bedstead, where, rolled up, just as he had described, lay the bundle of clothing.

"There!" he cried, catching hold of the trembling servant, and almost forcing him on top of it. "There's it is!"

"Yes, sir, there hit be," admitted the man, helplessly.

"Was that the suit he was last wearing when you saw him?" demanded Stamford.

"Yes, sir, that were hit."

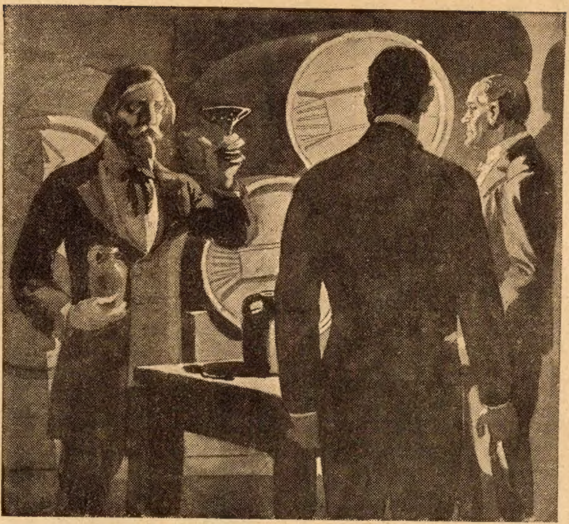
"Well, look here, now, Peter, you act as valet to uncle, and you know just how many suits he possesses. Get in that closet and that trunk and anywhere else that he keeps his clothes, and tell me suit for suit what he's now wearing—do you hear me? Hurry up, I must get downstairs again."

"Yes, sir, Hi 'ears you, sir, Hi'm a-hurrying hup, sir," and the affrighted servant commenced with frantic haste to sort over the wardrobe of the lost Captain, Stamford standing by, candle in hand, an interested spectator.

The butler was muttering to himself as he proceeded, his third and fourth finger constantly going to his chin in a bewildered manner, as he accounted for the various suits. "The broadcloth and the gray 'un, they're 'ere, and the pepper-and-salt 'un, and the two pairs of striped trousers, and the—oh, yes, aye, you 'ave the navy blue 'un, sir."

"Of course, I have," snapped Stamford, crossly. "Didn't you see me pick it up?"

"Yes, sir, that's so, sir, just so, sir, w'ere's the—oh, 'ere hit is! Yes, sir, all the clothes as Hi knows the Captain 'as lies 'ere, sir."



"Here's a fine old black-jack."

"What!" cried young Hamilton, aghast. "They're all here, you say. Peter, don't be a fool, man. What's the Captain wearing if all his clothes are here?"

"Yes, sir, that's hit, sir, wot's 'e wearing if hall his clothes is 'ere?" helplessly repeated the man.

"You can surely think of one—one suit that's missing—his gray dressing gown or his bathrobe—are they here?" proceeded Stamford.

"'Ere they be, sir, the one there and the t'other hin the bathroom, Hi looked there afore Hi come to you, sir."

"Well, what do you mean to say, Peter? Are you trying to tell me the Captain is not in this house, and yet all his clothes are?"

Again the butler's nervous fingers pulled at his chin in deep perplexity. "Yes, Master Stamford, that's 'bout—'bout wot hit 'pears to be," he stammered out.

"Oh, rot!" exploded Stamford. "You know he can't have left the place if all his duds are here. What do you mean by telling me that story? Are you sure, perfectly sure, Peter, that every one of the Captain's things are here. How about his boots, his shoes?"

"There they be, sir, every last one on 'em," and the servant pointed to a neat row of footwear he had just arranged across the floor of the closet.

Stamford gazed at the line in thoughtful scrutiny. Then he looked at the old man. For a few seconds neither of them spoke. Then Stamford broke the silence: "Well, then, Peter, it comes to this: That according to you, the Captain has left this house on a bitter night in December and wandered out without a stitch of clothing on, is that it? Are you positive all his underclothes are here; positive, I say, man?"

"Yes, sir, that's 'bout wot hit comes to, sir, I be positive as hall 'is clothes—everything—is 'ere, sir," admitted the man, almost reluctantly.

Again there was silence. The candle was burning low and spluttering in its socket. Old Peter's careworn face looked whiter and more seamed than ever. Young Hamilton's handsome, boyish features had assumed a puzzled, almost haggard appearance. The little French carriage clock on the mantelshelf ticked away industriously, as if warning the pair that time was flying. Then Stamford's strained, unnatural tones broke the stillness: "Peter, there are only two possible explanations of this extraordinary business. Either the Captain is still in the house, or he has lost his mind and has wandered out into the night naked. Now, which is it?"

"Yes, sir, just so, that's hit, sir, which his hit?" stammered the butler, hopelessly.

"Stay here," commanded Stamford, after a moment's inspection of the scared-looking servant. "I'll be up in a moment."

"Yes, sir, but—but——"

"Well?" cried Hamilton, sharply.

"But, but, Hi'd—Hi'd——"

"Oh, get it out, man. What is it? What do you want to say?"

"Hi'd much prefer, sir, to come down, down with you, sir, yes, sir, much prefer it," admitted the butler, with his eyes almost popping out of his head.

"Come on, then, you old funk!" invited Stamford, and he strode downstairs, followed closely by the affrighted Peter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JUDGE TAKES A HAND.

"It is a most curious thing," he observed, as he again entered the receptionroom and faced his guests. "I hope you'll excuse me leaving you alone."

"Can't you find him?" inquired Mr. Charrington, glancing up from the etching he held in his hand.

"Haven't yet," admitted Stamford, and stood there endeavoring to make up his mind as to what he should do—leave his guests and continue the search, or play the host and let the other matter wait. The old Virginian cut the knot for him. "Let me have a look," he exclaimed, with assumed gayety, as he arose heavily from the armchair. "You stay here, daughter, and amuse yourself with these Gibsons. I'll wager I'll soon find the old rogue—lead on, Macduff!"

The two men left the room, and followed by Peter, held a short conference in the Captain's den, where young Hamilton placed before the Virginian all the information he possessed.

"Now, tell me frankly, my boy, was the Captain drinking heavily? You need not fear to shock me; I've known your uncle since we were lads together; I've been with him in three continents, and I know what a friend of John Barleycorn's he is. Now, just what condition was he in, and how long had he been going it?"

"Why, sir, he wasn't so bad—not so awfully bad; he could carry himself all right, and he'd been drinking about a week, eh, Peter?"

"Yes, sir, 'bout a week, 'bout a week, hit 'pears to me, sir, and begging pardon, sir, 'e did stagger some, just a little, as you might say, but none to 'urt, sir, none to 'urt."

"And he was in this room when we arrived?" persisted Mr. Charrington.

"So I presume, sir; he was here when I came in half an hour before your arrival; I left him here and went to my room to dress. When you arrived I certainly heard him or some one in this room, as you entered the hall."

Peter was fidgeting about, anxious to say something, but the old gentleman nodded his head and remarked: "Yes, I, too, heard a noise—a chair or a table falling, I fancied, and he was not here when you went out five minutes later, Stamford?"

"No, sir."

"And then you went upstairs and looked for him?"

"Exactly, sir."

"Beg pardon, sir, but Hi saw 'im go hup meself," corroborated the butler.

"Oh, you saw him, did you, Peter?"

"Yes, sir, Hi surely did, and you'll excuse me, Master Stamford, but 'e wasn't a-carrying 'imself as well as 'e usual does; 'e kinder—kinder staggered, as you might say, again the banister."

"All right, then," assumed Mr. Charrington, summing up in his concise legal way, "we have this for sure then; Peter saw him go upstairs after our arrival, and while you were in the room with us—that's so, isn't it Peter?"

"Yes, sir, that's so," mumbled the servant.

"Peter," persisted the Virginian, fixing one eye sharly on the old man, "did you see the Captain come down again?"

"Who, sir, me, sir? No, sir, Hi didn't, sir."

"But you would, would you not, had he come down; that's a fact, is it not?"

"Yes, sir, that's a fact, Hi'd 'ave seen 'im if 'e 'ad come down, sir."

"Then you remained in the hall during the time Mr. Stamford was engaged in the receptionroom?"

"Yes, sir, that's so, sir, Hi did, sir."

"And then you and Master Stamford went up together?"

"Yes, sir, we went hup together."

"All right, up we go again—after you, my boy," this to the nephew.

In another minute the three stood in the missing man's chamber. The servant brought in a lamp, and Stamford again went over the case as far as he knew it, pointing out the remarkable fact that none of the Captain's clothes were missing.

"Umph!" muttered the ex-judge. "Now, that's odd—damned odd, as you might say, eh, Peter?" turning abruptly on the scared-looking butler.

"Yes, sir, hodd, sir—damned hodd, as you might say, sir," repeated the man, in a dazed manner.

"The oddest part of it to me," observed Stamford, "is the remarkably short time that elapsed from the time Peter saw him go upstairs and when I went up—why, it could not have been more than five minutes at the most, could it?"

"Certainly not more, I should say," agreed Mr. Charrington, as he walked about making a minute examination of the room. "And this door was locked—locked on the inside, you say, my boy?"

"On the inside, sir. The key fell out when I burst it open; I heard it fall.

"'Ere it his, sir," mumbled Peter, fumbling in his pocket and producing the key. "Hi picked hit hup when Hi came hup, sir."

"The windows, I observe, are both bolted on the inside; they were so when you came up, Stamford?"

"I really did not notice, sir."

"Yes, sir, both on 'em bolted, sir, Hi saw 'em," affirmed the butler, who had placed the lamp on the mantel, and now stood in most approved attitude, washing his hands with invisible soap.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Charrington, looking thoughtful, "you are sure, Peter, that they were both locked when you first came up? You noticed them, you say?"

"Yes, sir, Judge, Hi'm sure on hit."

"All right, that is all we shall require of you, just now. Mr. Stamford and I will talk this matter over, and will call you if we think you can be of any assistance to us; you can go."

"Yes, sir," and Peter withdrew.

"Suppose," suggested the Virginian to his host, "that we return to the receptionroom; we may as well talk it over there in comfort, and I'm sure Irene will wish to know the result of our search."

"Well?" demanded the young lady, glancing up as they entered. "Have you found him—no?"

Her father shook his head. "Not yet," he confessed; "but we have scarcely commenced to look. It is rather a singular thing—most singular, in fact, Irene, and I would like to at once give the case my attention, so——"

"Oh, if I'm in the way," the girl commenced, "that is, you know, pray don't consider me at all, father, nor you, Mr. Hamilton; but surely I can help, can I not? It makes me very anxious. What can possibly have occurred to him?"

"Well, that's what we want to find out," observed her father. "You sit here, girlie, and Mr. Hamilton and I will start an investigation at once. I think—that is, you know, Irene, the Captain was, as our friend Stamford here says, 'a little under the weather'—you know his weakness—and I really think he must have wandered off somewhere and——"

"But how could he, Mr. Charrington, considering that all his togs are—well, the fact is, Miss Charrington, all his clothes appear to have been left behind him," exclaimed Stamford.

"Oh, well, we'll see, we'll see. Believe me, my boy, I have come across some very extraordinary cases in the course of my life, and I must say that the most inexplicable of them are generally capable of some very commonplace explanation when the light of afterfacts are thrown upon them. I believe you will find it so now. Come along and talk it over with me in his den back there, and then I intend to search from cellar to eaves and satisfy myself that he is not somewhere in this house. You will be quite comfortable here, Irene, and I am sure under the circumstances, you will excuse our neglect of you, eh, girlie?"

"I wish I could help you," mused the young lady, scarcely noticing the apology.

"And so you may; very likely you will be able to later on, but you know my methods, daughter. I always look well into every fact, and then if I can make nothing of it myself, I call in Biggs—he's that little fat countryman of yours, I was telling you about last week, Stamford, a really most talented sleuth. But come along, let us go to the cellar first and leave his den until afterward."

"Peter! Say, Peter, bring the lamp," commanded Stamford, and the butler darted out from his little buffet kitchen with startling promptness. "Yes, sir, a lamp did you say, sir? Certainly, sir," and in another minute he was with them again, a lighted lantern in his hand. "Hi always uses this hin the cellar, sir, hit's safer than a candle or a lamp, with so much of that oil and hall the Captain's spirits and brandy hand things," he explained, as he led the way down into the gloomy vault. Neither of the two men made any comment, but silently followed the old man down the steps into the underground room.

"No window here?" questioned Mr. Charrington, taking in the place quickly by the yellow light of the lantern.

"No, sir, you know the Captain had this place excavated soon after he bought it, and he was advised not to go to the expense of raising the house, so he simply had it dug out and cemented. I have frequently heard him say that he wished

(Continued on page sixteen.)

Weddings

By WALTER A. SINCLAIR

MARRIAGES are made in Heaven, but weddings—well, they're imported from elsewhere. Not bawling out the way station; wild dictagraphs couldn't chisel it from me; but take it from me, sulphur matches cause other cantankerosity than phossy jaw.

Some wed in haste and repent in Reno, others take a slow boat when launching on the stormy seas of matrimony, and yet are hanging over the rail before they drop the sky-pilot. Hasty as they dish them up in this feverish age, a wedding listens like a couple of young eternities to the unhappy come-on who is just being extradited from the state of single cussedness to face a life stretch with no time off for good behavior.

It takes two to make a wedding—no, hold on there, I was thinking of a quarrel. From where we stand it is so hard to tell the diff. New start. It takes four to make a wedding, a bride, a bridegroom, a minister and a specimen of the Treasury Department's sauciest lithography. Of course, there can be a supporting cast of ten or a thousand, together with the minor comedians, such as fathers to give the bride away, best man to make the bridegroom take the hurdles, bridesmaids to outdazzle the bride, matrons of honor, flower girls, pages—human and society—and ushers in correct styles of convincing scenery.

But if the first four are on the job, the rest make—no, never mind. The bride will give herself away in time, the bridegroom can hire a springboard, and the minor walking characters can be left to the imagination, which is one of the best little places a number of them should be left.

To recount noses, we must have one bride, one bridegroom, one high executioner and one ten-spot, although you can play that last order as strong as the traffic will stand, otherwise nothing doing on those—wedding chimes. Consider it on. The preliminary bouts and semi-finals are over. The elimination race has strewn the tracks with all contenders who had ignition trouble or blew a tire in the stretch.

In one standing broad jump we have cleared the entire 374 pages of action, plot and dialogue, have skipped to the last chapter, where, with a low bleat of joy, she threw herself into his arms and scratched her nose on his scarf-pin, while the janitor turned on the light which was never seen on land or sea. Oh, blub!

Here comes the bride! Take a flash. She's a regular human being of the soprano persuasion, for the nonce impersonating an orange tree. There with the citrus fruit blossoms, anyhow, but they may turn out to be lemons. At a distance she may be a white goods sale taking a toddle, but when she goes into the back stretch, or rather the neck stretch, you pipe the fruit store and florist's sidelines, and know it's for sure bride.

She is there with words and music that only a woman society reporter could yodel, but to the crude male lamp she looks like a squab who had done a jump through a window screened with mosquito netting, carrying it unanimously, together with a wad of posies and a vestibuled train of white satin. That train has the rights over all through, limited, and accommodations on that line, and doesn't stop on signal or to whistle.

It's considerable stroll from the back drop to the front office, and any he person who had to do a Weston over that circuit would shy through a stained glass memorial, suffering acute panes, but the bride goes the route like a league ball takes the groove after Matty unwinds.

Sometimes it's a solo ramble, but usually a drove of dearest girl friends ease in on the film, trying to catch the train and just missing it. Two improbably laundered boys usually are on the rear observation platform of the bride's train staggering under the weight of a pound or so of silk or satin. Scouting ahead to see that the track is clear, a small suffragette scatters rose leaves with the touch system scat. The bride is under bonds to pursue each petal to its lair, kicking goal or on the first bounce, and giving it the hoof all the way upstage. If she misses a leaf she is penalized a yard.

The bride's feet have to be there with a musical education, because as she hits the runway to the jumping-off place an organist begins assault and battery on the ivories, ripping off reams of rumbles from Lohengrin or that one by Mrs. Mendelssohn's boy. For reasons not uncorked to the undersigned, the lads who threw together a mess of sad chords and turned out wedding marches, put on the brakes, while the bride who toddles to it would rather throw in the high gear to beat the victim to it before he makes a getaway. One has to be some doll to snail along to that stuff when she could nab the fall guy in one conservative hop, skip and jump, and have him cinched up before he came to.

The moment the bride strikes the chute every neck is supposed to be in a pivotal state, doing the open faced rubber toward the center aisle. The bride just lives on that stuff, it being her last whack at the spotlight, unless she romps into a divorce court, so she makes the most of it.

This divertisement gives the bridegroom his one cue to fall in through a side door from an anteroom of the execution chamber. Bridegrooms go to the halter on the arms of their best men, cheerful kidders who bear up under others' troubles like captive balloons. They should worry and get a wrinkle, those best men! The bridegroom is dressed in intentional black, to express his emotions. Frock coats are hacked out for the exclusive purpose of concealing the frivolous way in which the bridegroom's knees wallop together as he waits for the presiding official to duck into the black cap and pass sentence.

Nobody cares a hoot what a bridegroom wears, but let him slip a cog, and there would be a yelp heard round the world. Hence the best man to hook him up the back and muss up his cravat. As they leave the ways, the best man gives the unfortunate wretch a push which keeps him going until he lands bump up against the third rail. Going out is a pipe, a tapioca, because then the bride is on the works to lead the bridegroom firmly from thither, regardless of the mal de stare which the sea of faces gives him.

A wedding in a burg infested by Americans is followed immediately by an elegant collation, while one in New York is followed by a riot. Splendid police precautions are taken at Manhattan weddings so that the bridegroom hasn't a chance to break away and take to the timber. This refers to the rough-stuff which is pulled when a foreign title is wished on a native talent fortune. It requires a sporting editor and several war correspondents to do injustice to the affair, reporting the fight by rounds, and as one of these clawfests differs from the usual domestic finish article, as a candidate's performances differ from his campaign promises, we will take a hasty peek at the awful rough house.

After some ruling house of this democratic land (laughter) has been conquered by a foreign invader with a castle and reputation in bad repair, and the indemnity has been dug up, the march to the church gets the starter's flag and they're off. All the available policemen who are not under indictment are called in from such trifles as catching murderers and thieves, and massed about the place to prevent the freeborn American from hurling himself beneath the wheels of the conqueror's chariot. Roughnecks driving trucks are shunted off two blocks above or below the scene of the festivities, while the ordinary standees who will stand for anything are packed in tight where they can be walloped on the Boston baked without prejudice.

The harness clergy is on the job as a matter of indifference to ask if they take this man and this woman and they do knot. The match is then declared a tie and the contestants try to buck the line. At this moment large gobs of pandemonium break loose. Perfect ladies, who don't know whether a Jook's coronet is a musical instrument or not, hurdle the shoulders of other perfect 36's to get a peek at the bride's left ear. The order to begin the massacre is given and the mounted cops ride down the peasantry enough to get the automobile with the high contractors through to fresh air, with the aid of a shoe horn. The wedded pair escape to the boat, flee the country, and live happy ever after, if the bride's money holds out, or the bridegroom doesn't come home too often.

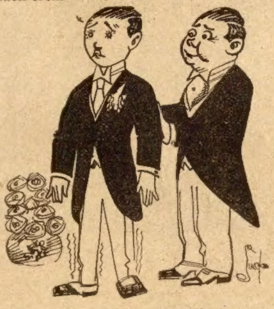
The Bride.

Home talent brides and bridegrooms usually compromise on a jaunt to Niagara Falls. Some have been known to frivol away the price of a second trip, at a later and sedater date, in order to see what the Falls really look like.

Bridesmaids are tittery young fluffs who look well in cute duds, and prevent the audience from getting its money's worth. They haven't a thing to do but stall around and try to make the bride look like a pelter by comparison.

Anybody can be a bridesmaid with a little practice or by taking a correspondence course. Bridesmaids give no assistance to the brides, being too busy trying to grab off a candidate for the matrimonial stakes themselves. There is a quaint superstition that if a girl continues to bridesmaid for more than thirty or forty years she will eventually become an old maid, finishing life's autumn in the sear and yellow leaf section.

The he portion of a wedding cast is about as important as the chorus man in a tired-business man musical comedy. Any boy who can comb his hair straight back from the eyebrows and can support a frock coat in a manner to which it has been accustomed, can make a noise like an usher or best man. But he always takes a chance of being snagged off by some designing damsel, that being one of the vocational risks.



Best men are cheerful kidders.

Fashionable hook-ups always take place at high noon. We shudder to think what would happen if we ran out of our supply of high noons and the minister punched the clock at low noon or medium-sized noon. High noons are a part of the high cost of living, and only the scandalously rich can cull them. But you can't make noons too high for bridal couples. The downtrodden are lucky to get any of the other assortments of noons left, and these are not warranted to wear well or not to shrink.

A bridegroom failing to lose the gold band or drop it on the floor when the dread moment to ring the prize arrives, classes himself as icily calculating and too mean for words. Cautious parties who want to take the high jump without making the usual fall-down have been known to stock their uniforms with rings in every pocket, thus making three-ring circuses of themselves.

Another little empty form is for the consulting specialist to inquire in a perfectly bullying manner if any one present can hang anything on the "I willers" before they let go the flying rings, if so to toot up now or forever hold his jaw.

We have a crayon enlargement of the hard oil finish which would rise up and smear any reckless gink who let out a blast about the past performances or unfitness of the persons joining lunch hooks. Everybody knows that the guys who have the bride's or groom's past mistakes up their sleeves have a rule that they must wait until after the knot is double riveted before coming around to twitter in the ear of the injured party what they know.

In spite of all of which, everybody's doing it, for, as the poet so beautifully said, "'Tis love that makes the world go round to the license clerk's office."

* * *

THE RACE FOR EDNA.

"Anderson Walker played it low down on us out there in Arizony in the old territorial days," said Red Bollins. "It's a territory still, for that matter, but they don't have them territorial days no more. I was readin' only yisterday about a hangin' out there, and it was done by the sheriff, and it warn't for stealin' a hoss, but an automobile—stealin' an automobile complicated with murder.

"Some of us fellers out there called ourselves the San Lorenzo Gold Mining Company and we mined some, but we didn't uncover no more gold than we did San Lorenzo. Wasn't neither of 'em there. San Lorenzo was a Spanish party, buried over in the old country, and there's buried gold over there, too, they say, and that give me the idea of buryin' some gold in our mine—saltin' it, they call it—and sellin' it to some innocent party.

"Our mine really was valuable, if we had had it in the States. It was the dodgumedset, allfiredest strong magnetic iron ore that anybody ever see. But it warn't worth nawthin' much in them times and in Arizony.

"Anderson Walker, a green young feller from Tennessee, come along with $20,000 and prospected and sniffed around for a gold mine for a couple of months and then let on he'd go farther. All the good gold bearin' properties was took up. Walker had started a debatin' society and otherwise identified himself with the community and regret was general when we heard he was goin' on because he couldn't get no good minin' property.

"'That young feller is a benefit to our whole community,' said Eli Griggs, president of our company, and I for one am willing to do anything to keep him here. I was always a great believer in spendin' money to home and keepin' money in a community. He'll go away if he can't git a minin' property. To keep him I'm willin' to salt our mine and sell it to him. If we offer it cheap he'll suspicion that it's no good, so we'll have to charge him $20,000.'

"'That's right,' said Tom Osborne. 'Some day, when the town grows, that property will make valuable building lots, and he's younger'n we be and can wait.'

"So we exchanged our mine for Anderson Walker's $20,000. He worked at it a while and then quit and some of the time he formerly spent in moral uplift he now spent shootin' at a dummy he had rigged up, and it wore an old jumper that Eli Greggs had left in the mine.

"Most of the fellers in the town was tryin' to court Edna Percival, daughter of Jake Percival, who had a hoss ranch below town. Anderson seemed to have the best holt with Edna. She had been proposed to 500 times, eleven of 'em by George McGarvey. She was not only a good looker, but she was the only girl for eighty miles around that wasn't a Mexican or an Injun. She would have married somebody quick enough, but her daddy said it would result in the rejected suitors killin' the successful one and the fightin' would be awful. As a hoss dealer he didn't want to lose customers.

"But there was so many fellers callin' regular at Jake's to see Edna, and they all stayed to supper, that Jake said he'd be et out of house and home. So he announced that on a certain day he'd give Edna to the feller that won a free for all saddle race, entrance fee $200, proceeds to be a dowery for Edna. Immediately he had a chance to sell all his hosses and even his mules.

"Anderson got a mule and folks wondered how he could hope to win, for it was an ornery mule and was named the Royal King of Spain. He got the job of buildin' the racetrack and folks wondered why there needed to be a racetrack. He rock ballasted most of it, too, usin' ore from his mine. The first part of the track was dirt, and then farther along he put some ballast and then more and finally an awful lot of it—regular macadam road. Nobody was allowed on the track until the race.

"Anderson bet $3,500 that he would win and the boys took him, givin' him odds of 10 to 1.

"A great laugh went up when Anderson ambled out to line up for the race, for the Royal King of Spain was shod with silver! The boys were amazed to find he thought so much of that mule that he had nailed silver shoes on its feet. When the race began he was seventy-fifth in no time, but pretty soon he was forty-ninth and was pluggin' along behind the fastest hosses, which was bunched together. The crowd howled with laughter—for a few seconds—for to their surprise and horror that mule was haulin' up on them hosses!

"Yes, sir. For them hosses acted as if they had run into an awful head wind. They was slowin' up. It seemed just as if somebody had hitched a load on to 'em. There they was, pullin' and strainin' and there the mule was, runnin' as easy as a hound dog. The mule come up on 'em, scooted by 'em, and was at the head of the cavalcade as it thundered down the finish, goin' under the wire ahead of 'em all!

"Walker had won $35,000. The entrance fees netted Edna $15,000. Jake had made something by sellin' his hosses and mules. The boys got together and discussed what could have made the mule beat 'em. The spectators said the mule didn't git to goin' faster after the start; it was merely that the hosses kept goin' slower.

"Hank Lamber, the assayer, and me rode around the course.

"'Our hosses seem to have a little difficulty in liftin' their feet,' I says. 'Why, it's gittin' worse,' I says. 'Why, they're stickin' like they couldn't hardly lift their feet,' I says.

"'Of course they are!' exclaimed Hank. This road bed is magnetic ore from Walker's San Lorenzo mine—strongest loadstone in creation! Walker's mule was shod with silver. The magnetism that affected the hosses' iron shoes didn't bother him.

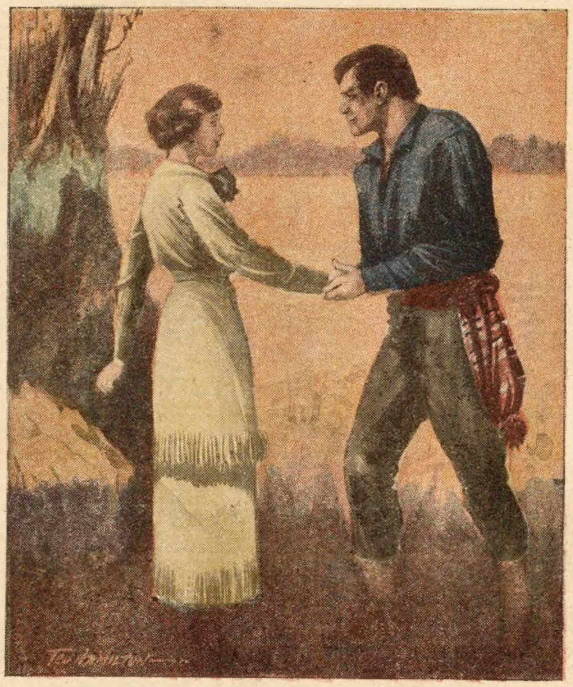
"The boys was mad when we told 'em and they started for Jake's ranch with a rope to git Walker.

"There was nobdy at the ranch—nawthin' but a letter from Walker sayin' that if the boys was sore at him for bettin' on a sure thing, he would make over to 'em his equity in a claim for damages ag'in the former owners of the San Lorenzo.

"Well, the boys was so mad that they wanted to take it out of somebody. They said that if the San Lorenzo Gold Mining Company hadn't cheated Walker he wouldn't have been able to doctor the track, so they said we was liable for his crime. I tell you it was a narrer escape we had gittin' out of that old town."

The Captive Goddess

Or, THE FAR NORTH GUARD :=: By WILLIAM H. MANNING



"Monsieur Huot, I thank you."

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CHAPTER VII.

VICTIMS OF TREACHERY.

LORRISON did not see the other man under the trees, and, suddenly quickening his pace, he went on toward the campfire and soon disappeared from David's sight.

David had stood without stirring a foot. With Lorrison out of range he again turned lakeward. The strange boat was still visible, but receding steadily. In that night-light he could not be sure, but he was stoutly of the impression that it was the same craft that had dogged them all the way from the mouth of Red River.

"It is lucky for John Lorrison that Gareau has not witnessed what I have seen here!" muttered the voyageur.

It was lucky for the elderly gentleman. If the captain had seen that mysterious boat putting off, and Lorrison coming from the point the strangers appeared just to have left—well, it would have gone hard with the gentleman.

David's chief feeling was one of bewilderment. After weighing all the evidence, and admitting inwardly that some spies were very cunning at putting on innocent exteriors, he had decided that John Lorrison was mentally and physically incapable of doing evil or good, except after the fashion of women and children. The man seemed to lack muscular strength, endurance and energy, and his mental gifts pointed to familiarity with books, society, city affairs, and no more.

Could he be a spy? If he was not, what had he just been doing? Had he held a secret conference with the occupants of the boat?

Reith could not investigate these problems, nor, if Lorrison was a deep plotter, could there be any understanding between them. As a secret agent David could confide in nobody else, be his sympathies and position in the fur-trade what they might.

Presently he moved toward the camp, and had nearly reached it when a figure came from the gloom of a tree and moved hesitatingly toward him. Surprised and not a little startled, his own movements wavered. The other walker was the Goddess.

"Is it not Jean Huot?" she asked diffidently, and in a low voice.

He removed his cap and stood at respectful attention.

"Mademoiselle," he returned, "you are right. I am Huot."

"I have a delayed duty to perform," she said, hastily. "No, a great pleasure. You saved my life when the boat was wrecked, and I am very, very grateful. Monsieur Huot, I thank you warmly."

"Mademoiselle, I greatly appreciate your good words, but I deserve less than you think. I only did my duty and if I had not done it my comrades were there. They, too, knew what duty was."

"Ah! but they were there, and none but you lifted a hand. Do not think I blame them, for it was a time of trial for all, but the fact is that 'twas you who acted, that 'tis to you I owe my life."

"I happened to be first——"

"Suppose I had drifted away, had been flung about by the deadly waves? Ah! let not your modesty go too far, monsieur. It was you who saved me. Pray do not deny the unalterable."

"Since you command, I am mute. And, mademoiselle, I am glad I was able to save you."

"I have wanted to say this before, but you were always with your comrades, and it is hardly an injustice to say they are not all men of refined feeling. Frankly, rough badinage is uncomfortable, to me. So much for that. Voyageur, this wild life of yours is remarkable. Were I a man I would follow the waters."

Reith bowed in silence.

"It all fascinates me," she went on. "The pull at the oars, the pemmican and harouge, the rapids, the portage, the packing of inland pieces, the tracking-line, the jest, and the chansons! What a life!"

"Of toil!" David suggested.

"But of romance! Have you always been a voyageur?"

"Nearly always."

"And have you always served the Hudson Bay Company——"

The Goddess stopped short. Her tongue had betrayed her into a slight slip. She shot a glance toward the camp and moved uneasily.

"Pardon me," she added, hurriedly. "This is no time for words. I wandered a few steps, seeking rest for my thoughts, but it is the hour for sleep, and I must go. Monsieur again I thank you!"

She dropped a little courtesy and turned and hurried away as if fearful of something. David knew what it was. Better for her that Ferdinand Gareau did not know of this interview.

He saw her go with mixed emotions. It had been a pleasure to speak with her, but he had all the while been on nettles. Well he knew that if the captain was aware of the interview it would make Jean Hout a marked man from that hour. Suspicion would follow knowledge, and Reith's usefulness would be curtailed if not destroyed.

Himself going quietly into camp, he found the tent without signs of life and Lorrison under his blanket. David went to his interrupted rest.

In the morning attention was given to the boat. Its freight, the inland pieces, being removed, betrayed more than ever what a sham they were. Some weighed less than twenty pounds, and it was certain that they had no value save that of deceiving casual attention.

The boat, itself, was badly damaged. A rock had rent the bottom, and though all voyageurs knew the art of making repairs under wilderness conditions, the present boatmen knew their craft would never be really reliable again. The wound was so great that weakness must remain even after patching was done.

While they labored the Goddess talked with John Lorrison by the fire. Each hour she grew to pity the unfortunate gentleman more than ever. His intelligence, his courtesy, his unaffected air of good breeding impressed her, and the depth of her sympathy was not wholly disguised in words. On the other hand, her beauty, her kindness and attentions touched him deeply, and they were growing to be good friends.

At times he studied her face attentively. Perhaps something there impressed and interested him, but he made no comment.

Once, Gareau came to them laughing. "The lake has given us a present," he said. "A bark canoe, lost together with its paddle by some Indian, has drifted ashore. We have it now. Can you paddle, Mademoiselle Prefontaine?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Do you hear that, Lorrison?" cried the leader. "She can handle a canoe! Come, Lorrison, confess that you know nothing of a canoe!"

"I surely am not an expert," replied the gentleman, modestly, "yet I have seen considerable experience. Were I stronger, physically, I could even now paddle fairly."

"'Tis a noble art. You are lucky—believe me, you are lucky to know how to handle a canoe. Well, we have nearly finished repairs on the boat, which means we shall soon leave this island. Here come Pau and Roussin. Voyageurs, fall to and start the cooking. Mr. Lorrison, have you seen any sign of the oscaturo root hereabouts?"

"I don't know the root, and think I never heard of it before," the gentleman admitted.

"It is eaten, cooked like the potato. Mixed with pemmican and onions, it makes a variation of rubeiboo. Mademoiselle, may I have your company while I search for it?"

The Goddess did not care to go, but did not think it well to refuse. They went, and their steps soon ceased to be heard. Five minutes later Pau suddenly addressed his comrade.

"Roussin, where is the tea?"

Parbleu!" exclaimed Jacques. "I believe it is all by the boat."

"Go and get it."

Roussin disappeared, but was barely out of sight when Pau broke silence again.

"The stupid fellow will forget the urn. Monsieur Lorrison, can your servant cook?"

"Very well," said Lorrison, absently.

"Then, I pray you, let him watch to see that nothing burns. I will return in time to brew the tea."

Pau went, and, with grave matters pressing upon him, Lorrison watched the cooking without being aware of the fact. It was good that Gareau was to convey him a part of the way on his journey, but after that came the long journey to the Pacific, and still later—what? When the new land was reached he would have neither money nor experience, yet he must earn his living. But how—how, when he did not know how to do anything practical? A sigh admitted foregone defeat.

Meanwhile, the food being cooked, Jeremiah had removed it from the fire. He finally accosted his master nervously.

"Why don't they return?" he asked, plaintively. "They are long away. Oh, sir, they may have deserted us!"

Lorrison stirred, thought, and then his face twitched nervously.

"Let us go to the boat, Jeremiah," he said.

They went. They reached the water, but no boat was to be seen, and no men. The canoe was there, hauled up on the land, and a strip of bark was fastened to the upright paddle. Jeremiah saw it first, snatched at it, gazed hard, and then, uttering a scream, dropped it and fell to the ground. Wailing, he lay there writhing like one almost in a fit.

Coward that Jeremiah was, the master did not need assurance that calamity had come. He picked up the bark. Words were written there, and he read without difficulty. The message was short.

"You say you can use a paddle. Here is your chance. This canoe is a gift to you. We have left the island never to return."

Lorrison grew deathly pale.

"Left to our fate!" he cried, despairingly. "Oh! this is cruel, cruel!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGE CAPTAIN.

Gareau's party was at halt on Tealyard Island. The captain was very familiar with that part of the lake, and he had found a good miniature harbor for their boat. When he had overseen necessary matters he went to the Goddess, who had been out of temper since leaving Bitter Island, and nearly as silent as old Life Hand. He had something to say now, and began inwardly wholly unabashed by the girl's coldness.

"Mademoiselle, I see that you blame me. I could not explain with all my men about us, but I will do so now."

"Sir," she replied, quietly, "you are in command of the boat and your word is law, but had I been in your place, that feeble old man and his servant would never have been left to die on Bitter Island."

"Pardon me," returned Gareau, mildly, "but why should they die? I left them a canoe, a paddle, blankets, enough pemmican for a week, and tea. Why should they die?"

"Are they in the regular course of trade-boats?"

"No."

"What can they do with the canoe?"

"Lorrison said he could manage a canoe."

"Do you really think he has the ability? Granted that he once knew, has he the muscular strength?"

"Mademoiselle, I have seen weak men do great deeds ere now."

The Goddess did not reply.

"What could we do with him?" Gareau resumed. "Do you forget why we are here?"

She started, and her expression changed, but he went on quickly, persuasively:

"I am a mere atom in the plan of nature in Rupert's Land; no more than the smallest bird that wings its way about, except that I am the power that does what the great fur company orders. I am nothing, but that company is great. Its orders have been given, and I am here. So are you. We have a duty to perform. For that other men must be shut out of our companionship."

"But if you had conveyed him to the regular boat course he would eventually have been rescued by somebody from whatever island you might have set him upon."

"He has his canoe, and is free to go where he will."

Silent, she made an eloquent gesture. She remembered that Lorrison was weak and far from young.

"Another thing," and here Gareau sank his voice. "I set a trap for the man, and he practically confessed he was a spy for—well, for that other fur company that rivals ours."

"That old man a spy?"

"Pardon, mademoiselle, but he is far from being what should be termed old—he is less than sixty. Ay, and his seeming weakness may cover great wiry strength."

His voice sank still lower and he impressively added:

"Whatever is his fate, my duty called to me. I am a servant of the great company. I have orders to proceed with dispatch, cunning, and secrecy, and to bar all others from our boat and our comradeship. This must apply to castaways and the old, though it was not so stated. I beg, mademoiselle, that you will remember why we are here, remember our great work, remember the cause we represent."

"I will not contend with the captain of our boat, but I pity Mr. Lorrison," the Goddess said, sighing.

"I wish I knew just who he is. Mademoiselle, I have seen that man before. His face is an unreadable leaf from the past."

He fell into thought and the subject was dropped, but her face was sad, and she sighed again more than once. Perhaps her mood would have been more emphatic had she known that Gareau was ardently hopeful that Lorrison and Jeremiah would die on Bitter Island.

Night presently fell and the voyageurs sat around the fire. With the exception of David Reith the boatmen were gay and content, and there was nothing to tell of great enterprises under way, but the quiet was not to continue. The captain's roving gaze took notice of something that leaned against a tree. It was a pair of oars.

"Where are the rest of those things?" he demanded, pointing.

"I brought these two," replied Solime Vager, "and you said you would fetch the others yourself, Captain."

"So I did, but I fear I forgot. Go for them quickly, Solime."

Gareau was under the attack of a nervous period. He had risked something by leaving the boat where it was, but it was folly to leave even one oar. He hastened Vager with a sharp gesture, and the voyageur went running. The leader drummed with his fingers on his knee. Yes, he had been careless, but——

Shouts came from the water in Solime's voice, and they were loud and demanding. Gareau leaped up nervously.

"Derg and Findley stay here," he ordered. "The rest of you, come!"

A short run took them to where Vager was fairly dancing in rage.

"The oars are gone!" he shouted. "They have taken them!"

"They? Who?"

"The men in the other boat. See! They were here when I came near, but they made off. Out on the lake—look!"

The other explanation was needed. A boat and men were visible in the dim light, and the blades rose and fell steadily and rapidly as their wielders rowed. They were making away from the island.

Gareau gave an order and then threw up his rifle and fired. His followers were not much behind him, and bullets whistled across the water, but a jeering laugh floated back, and the oars did not lose their rhythm. Firing by starlight was uncertain business.

The captain was in a passion, for the escape of the strangers could not be prevented, and no way of pursuit was open to them.

"Why in perdition," he cried, hotly, "do those men chase us so?"

"Is it the same party that has been dogging us?" Pau asked.

"There is no doubt of it. They follow us like bloodhounds. But why? Tell me why?"

Nobody could tell, and they fell to the problem of their new situation. They had a boat, but only two oars.

"When the wind serves we can get away under sail," Findley reminded.

"Yes," added Chalifoux, "and I think we can easily reach Isle Boisee. The timber is poor right here, but Boisee has excellent wood for that purpose."

"Better than that!" cried Gareau, forcing a short laugh. "Better than that is on Boisee. I'll show you when we reach there."

His light spirits soon died away, and he again took up the question forced upon him by the strangers. Who were they?

It was a land of solitude, where one might journey long and never see another craft, and when there were encounters they were few. Of the few goers Indians went in canoes and voyageurs in inland boats. The men who dogged the present party had a so-called passenger boat, a type used by the Governor of the Hudson Bay Company and a few other dignitaries. The question of their identity was puzzling, but they worried those they followed so persistently.

Directing Pau and Grout to sleep in the boat the rest of the night, Gareau finally returned to the camp. There he assumed an air of careless confidence, and spoke of roving thieves, belittling the affair, and presently all were in their blankets.

In the morning there was a breeze from the southwest, and they hastened to eat and get under way. For a time fortune favored them, and they neared Isle Boisee at a good pace, but midway a calm fell and they lost all way. For hours they merely drifted, but nature was not done with variety. The wind rose, giving promise of a storm, and with bellying sails they made the final run. By the time the land was gained the water was violent, but Gareau knew the course well, and he sent the boat into a small cove, where they brought her to and all were soon on shore.

"Delightful!" cried the captain. "Our troubles are all past. Use the tracking-lines and make fast. You will find this a place to warm your hearts. Hitch her up tight, lads! Now for camp!"

Isle Boisee was a tract of eighty heavily timbered acres, but it was provided with no rises sufficient to break the force of the wind. Reliance must be had on the trees. Gareau selected a spot to his liking, and set his followers to work with impetuous orders.

"I will leave you a while," he added. "I want to look about me. Nobody is to move more than five rods from here until I return. Expect me in ten minutes."

It was half an hour before he reappeared. A surprising change had come over him. His harassed look was gone, his face beamed, and as soon as he joined them he broke into a merry chanson, waving his hand exaggeratedly as he beat time to his song. The voyageurs looked hard, for this was a new Ferdinand Gareau, but they made no comments. Martin Derg had something more important to say, and he approached.

"Captain, we are to have a bad storm. Shall we not move the cargo and pull the boat as much on shore as possible?"

"To the deuce with the boat!" cried Ferdinand, his manner airy.

"But as the wind increases it will pound spitefully on the land, and perhaps go to pieces—hein, Captain?"

"That for the boat!" said the leader, snapping his fingers.

The voyageurs exchanged wondering glances.

"What shall we do," asked Pau, "if it be wholly wrecked?"

"Ay," added Chalifoux, "and how shall we leave Isle Boisee?"

"Fly, mes enfants, fly as the birds do. Shall man admit that he is their inferior? Let the boat go. We will take to wing!" and he laughed buoyantly.

There was ominous silence. When the captain of a boat so disregarded his means of transportation—which was almost the same as his life—there was something very wrong. Had Gareau gone mad?

CHAPTER IX.

A CALL FOR RIFLES.

Although no rain was falling, the Goddess found the wind trying, and she retired to her tent before the first sign of night. Lying down upon her couch she quickly succumbed to weariness and fell asleep. It was nearly two hours after that she awakened and heard an unusual stir in camp.

"What does the sound of excited voices mean?" she asked of old Life Hand. "Is there trouble?"

"No trouble," answered the Indian, reassuringly. "Two men have been wrecked from a canoe. They had a long, long fight to reach here without drowning, and the silly voyageurs would have gone out to help them, but Ferd Gareau is no soft-head. He said let them drown. They were stubborn enough to live, but they were near death I reckon—out there. Fools! Why didn't they drown as the captain wished them to?"

She had expected the Goddess to be as deaf to pity as herself, and it was a great surprise when the girl, having learned a part, ran from the tent and approached the fire. The boatmen were grouped around something, but she pushed her way through and saw what.

"Wrecked men!" she exclaimed. "Let me aid them! Poor fellows, it is hard to —why, it is Mr. Lorrison!"

"Yes, mademoiselle," replied Findley, who was nearest her. "Lorrison and his servant."

The Goddess looked closer. The unfortunate gentleman lay like one in a swoon or dead, but Jeremiah, wild with terror, wrestled with Pau and Chalifoux, and would have broken away from their restraining hands. The frightful experience of the fight for life in the frail craft had temporarily unseated his reason.

Shocked, the girl gazed for a while and then abruptly stirred.

"Carry Mr. Lorrison to my tent!" she directed. "The tent! Lift him, voyageurs!"

She spoke to men who feared their leader, and they hesitated, but Gareau came forward with a hypocritical smile.

"Obey her," he said. "The poor man should have all possible kindness. Carry him, and we will care for the good servant here. Away!"

There was a half-hidden sneer in his words, and some of the men grinned at his dubious humor, but they had their directions and obeyed. Lorrison was borne as ordered, and left in the tent to the attention of the Goddess and Life Hand. The captain kicked Jeremiah brutally and then snapped to his followers:

"Get sense into this idiot if you can. I suppose we must pull him through. Still, if you kill him by accident, no matter."

Irritated, he strode from the spot and went to the shore. There a fragment of a broken canoe lay in the growing dusk, and he scowled at it blackly.

"I did too well when I gave you to him. While we lay becalmed he must have paddled lustily—and he still lives. Bah!"

He kicked the fragment into the water, wishing it was the man who had refused to drown.

At the end of half an hour he had grown calmer and more far-seeing, and, not wishing to get the permanent ill will of the Goddess, he went to the tent. Lifting the flap without ceremony he entered.

He saw Life Hand squatting at one side with the vigilance of a trained nurse, while the Goddess sat with the gray head of the patient in her arms, her face bent forward solicitously. Lorrison seemed wholly unconscious, but almost at once his eyes unclosed and his gaze was turned feebly upon the Goddess. Something strange followed. Joy flashed into the pallid face and his voice rose excitedly.

"Sister!" he exclaimed. "My dear, dear sister!"

Gareau started and fell back a step. For good reasons he was startled by the words, and cunning suggested that he hear the rest from a different point. Aware that only Life Hand had seen him, he motioned to that reliable person and moved outside the entrance.

Lorrison was looking at the Goddess with eyes that drank of her face, but she saw only delirium in what he had said.

"Be composed, sir," she said, soothingly. "All danger is past."

He lifted a wavering hand to his head, looked a little longer and sighed deeply.

"I remember," he murmured.

"You were saved from the water, you know."

He knew, and warm words of accusation trembled on his lips, but he had learned that great lesson of life, that a still tongue gets its owner into no difficulty, so he passed by what was most vivid.

"What I do know," he resumed, "is that I have the sympathy of a merciful woman. Dear lady, I bless you for your kindness. I shall be better presently, and then—but I am selfish. My servant, my poor Jeremiah—was he saved?"

"He was saved, and, I think, has suffered no injury."

"Good Jeremiah! I must see him presently and soothe his mind. If I may rest briefly——"

"Sir, my tent is open to you now, and as long as you can possibly need it. Naturally, your strength will not permit you to leave it tonight, and I wish you to stay as long——"

"Nay, nay!" he interrupted, quickly. "It is not fitting that a man should occupy the most substantial shelter, even when afflicted. Such shelter is the rightful refuge of a lady. Besides, I think my strength is not so much impaired——"

He tried to rise, but the Goddess gently restrained him.

"Not yet!" she urged. "Wait until exhaustion departs a little more."

He lay quiet, looking at her intently.

"The way of woman!" he murmured. "Pity goes linked with thoughtful consideration, and sympathy springs from her heart in a heavenly flood. The way of woman!"

"In the present case, sir, it is only justice, but I trust I can feel the sympathy that all the human race should give to its stricken ones. And, most surely, my sympathy is now yours."

"I thank you, lady—yes, most deeply."

His voice shook, and he might well have added more radical speech, but even in his weakness his prudence was as active as his unfailing courtesy. Now, as always before, his breeding showed plainly.

The resources of the party enabled the Goddess to supply something in the way of stimulants, and these and rest gradually drove away the most acute phase of his exhaustion. With the stronger flow of life he grew anxious to end what he considered his intrusion, and she could not restrain him. With her aid, supplemented by that of Life Hand, he came slowly to his feet, and, after repeating his thanks, he walked from the tent with better ease than had been expected.

Night had fallen, and the fire, wind-lashed, burned brightly with the men around it. Gareau, having abandoned his position as a spy, was there, and he came to his feet and advanced a few steps.

"Welcome, Lorrison!" he called out, lightly. "If in need of the warmth sit and toast your shins. We are famous for our hospitality."

The victim of fate gazed hard at the speaker. He knew that this man had stood on the island and watched his fight for life without an effort to save him. It was now a bitter, cruel jest to talk of hospitality, but he dared not administer a reproof.

"I am thankful for the warmth, sir," he replied, quietly.

"Pray, have you had supper?"

The question was an insult, for Gareau knew the guest had been fighting for life in the canoe when others eat, but it was passed by, and only a simple negative returned. The captain ordered the supper, and Lorrison walked to where Jeremiah, now gifted with reason again, lay in a state of collapse.

"My poor fellow!" murmured the master, kindly. "Has it gone hard with you?"

"Oh! why did I leave beautiful Montreal?" cried Jeremiah, with a sob. "Never again shall I look on the temples of civilization. Why did I come to this heathen land, where men fashioned as murderers walk abroad——"

The gentleman bent quickly and stopped the words with hand and speech, finally quieting his man. When food was brought he managed to eat, and then reclined by the fire while Gareau gibed him further. Truly, John Lorrison had never seen a more bitter night, and the outlook gave promise of nothing better. Mercy was not to be expected.

Half an hour passed. Rain still held off, but the leader had a tent made for himself from the cargo coverings, and when it was done the voyageurs began their preparations for rest. Moving about the camp, they naturally looked around them at the woods and waters, and then it was that Martin Derg suddenly sounded a new cry.

"Look, look!" he directed, pointing lakeward.

His comrades obeyed, but darkness had succeeded a lightning flash, and nothing but blackness was there. Waiting, the next flash was improved, and nobody needed to question then.

"A boat!" cried several voices in chorus.

"Sacre!" snarled Gareau, "it's those knaves that have been dogging us so long!"

"Surely!" agreed Derg. "We cannot mistake. It is they!"

"They won't dog us much longer!" exclaimed Roussin. "They will be upside down very soon. See! The boat goes over now!"

It did look as if the mysterious craft was taking its final plunge, for the angle of inclination was acute, but the light faded and left the matter in uncertainty. Presently another flash came.

"They live!" shouted Vager. "The craft is a cork."

"Say, rather," answered Napoleon Pau, "that the men know their business perfectly. Voila! they row like giants, and the steersman—ah! my soul, he beats the waves at their own game. Pretty boatmen, they!"

"Whelps of the devil, rather!" snapped Ferdinand Gareau. "Yes, and the devil watches over his own. Will no storm drown them? Why do they hang about where we go?"

"They will make this island!" added Chalifoux.

"No, they won't!" shouted Gareau. "They shall die before they get here. Voyageurs, bring your rifles! We will shoot them down as they row!"

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

* * *

All in the Family.

Perhaps Jonathan Higgs did not know he was a hard man with his family, says a writer in the Youth's Companion. It is possible to look at things from a selfish angle so long that you grow blind to everything except your own wants. One day early in spring, when Jonathan was ready to drive into town, his wife gave him thirty-five dollars that she had been saving for months from her butter and egg money.

"Go to the furniture store," she said, "and get the new parlor carpet. They know the one, for I had them lay it away for me a month ago."

All day Mrs. Higgs went about her work singing. But when Jonathan came there was no roll of carpet in the wagon; instead, hitched to the back of the wagon, was a new cultivator.

"I found just the cultivator I needed," he explained, glibly. "I didn't think I could afford to get it until you gave me that thirty-five dollars."

"But my carpet?" His wife's eyes were wet, and she bit her lip to keep it from trembling.

"Oh, the old one'll do!" he said, with light contempt. "What's the use of spending money for a carpet? It ain't good to eat, and it don't make you any money. Now that cultivator will make me a hundred bushels more corn."

"But it was my money." Tears at her disappointment and her husband's injustice could not be kept back longer.

"Oh, pshaw," said Jonathan, lightly, "it's all in the family!"

The old carpet was full of holes, so Mrs. Higgs tore it up, and left the floor bare all summer. But Jonathan did not mind at all. The crops were good, and one day in the fall Mrs. Higgs and one of the girls went to town to buy the week's supplies. All the men were busy sowing wheat.

The farmer wrote a check for a hundred and sixty dollars, and gave it to his wife.

"Maria," he said, "get this cashed at the bank; then go to the hardware store, pay them a hundred dollars, and tell them to send out that gasoline engine they were showing me. It is too hard work for me and the boys to pump water for all the stock this winter. And stop at the clothing store and tell Mr. Jones to send me that suit I tried on. Get him to take off two dollars if you can. And you can pay that thirty-dollar account at the grocery store, too."

It was dark when Mrs. Higgs and Mary drove up that evening, and when Jonathan went out he was astonished to see a new buggy trailing along behind the wagon. And there were other things in the wagon that gave him a further shock.

"Maria," he asked, sharply, "did you order that engine?"

"No."

"Did you get my suit?"

"No." She handed the lines to one of the boys. "Nor I didn't pay the grocery account," she said, coolly. "You can't eat a suit nor a gasoline engine nor a receipted bill, and they don't make you any money.

"I got a new buggy to save wear on the wagon, a new parlor carpet that will save coal by keeping the floor warmer, and a new range that'll cook the food right. And I got a new churn and a lot of kitchen things to help me and the girls do the work—they will keep us from wearing out, and save funeral expenses."

"But it was my money, and I told you——" gasped the amazed Jonathan.

"Oh, yes," said Maria, lightly, "but it's all in the family. Take hold here, and you and the boys get these things unloaded."

There was something so resolute in her tone that he took hold, and held his tongue.

* * *

Fulfilled His Contract.

When the village decided that it could afford to have its streets sprinkled, old Fritz Pfankucken was put in charge of the wagon.

One day while on his rounds he stopped to gossip with a crony. And suddenly he looked up at the sky.

"Mein Gott!" was his exclamation, as he started his horses. "It iss going to rain!"

He turned in farewell and discovered an amazed expression upon his friend's face.

"I must hurry up," he called back, "and vater dese streets. Odervise it iss no use!"

A DUEL OF WITS

VS. A DUEL WITH SWORDS ❧ ❧ By ELLA MARTIN

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CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THE MAID REVEALED.

THE hours dragged slowly by, and it was near evening when Estella returned looking fatigued.

"It will be all right," she volunteered, noting the question in the eyes of the anxious girl. Then she laughed and added: "The once-vacant flat is now inhabited—not room enough left unoccupied for a battle between two mice. I paid the rent in advance and had a poor family I am interested in moved into it. The rest of the building was already occupied."

"But—but," stammered Marie, "they will arrange another meeting elsewhere."

"That is exactly what I am figuring on. And I will attend to that also. Don't worry! My plans are all laid, but I am too tired to go into details concerning them."

But Marie was not satisfied; she was too fearful of the consequences of her short-lived love story—the sequel to her blind infatuation.

"Madam," she ventured, "let me confess all to Mr. Grant. That will clear you in his eyes, even if it doesn't put a stop to the duel."

"Never!" Estella cried, her brown eyes flashing, the anger rising in her throat until it nearly choked her. "I will save him from danger; but never will I stoop to explain my conduct to one who believes me guilty of a liaison!"

"But, oh, you do not know all the seeming evidence there is against you. That man—he is a villain—I know it now, but I never dreamed, I never guessed what he intended to do."

"What are you stammering over, Marie? Didn't you hear me say I am tired? Help me to get into something more comfortable than this tight-fitting suit. After you have brushed my hair you may bring me some refreshments. I shall not go down to dinner."

"You must hear me out, madam," insisted the girl, though fearful of the other's displeasure. "Your husband found the note you wrote to this man for me. John Carver dropped it on the front steps, purposely, I am sure. It was part of his plot."

Mrs. Grant, who had gone directly to her boudoir, her only thought being to exchange her street costume for a negligee, had thrown herself into an easy chair, and leaned back with a sigh of weariness. She leaned forward now and peered at the girl with straight, level gaze.

"And were you in the plot, Marie? No half-truths at a time like this. Answer me!"

"No, indeed, madam! How can you think it? I was his tool and did not know it. I hate him now, since I found him out. He never was my lover, he only pretended, so as to get acquainted with the house."

"Very well; I believe you," and the strained look on her face subsided. She leaned back in her chair again, her interest in the subject gone, at least so it appeared to the maid.

Marie hastened to do her bidding, her story only half told; for not yet was the time ripe to confess that she had deceived her into writing the note that had done all the mischief. She would never trust her again if she knew. And perhaps she should never confess, now that it could do no good except to destroy her employer's confidence in her.

It was late when Mr. Grant returned, and he went, as on that other night, at once to his room directly across the corridor from the woman from whom he was self-estranged. Before retiring Estella Grant said to her maid:

"I have noticed that your handwriting is somewhat of the masculine order. Has this man who calls himself John Carver ever seen your writing?"

"No, madam; the only note I ever sent him was the one you wrote for me."

"Well, then, I must ask you to return the favor and write him at my dictation, a letter purporting to be from Richard Grant, and appointing a new place for the meeting between them. It must be addressed to James Northcote."

"Yes, madam; but——"

"My husband will go to the place agreed upon between them, while James Northcote, gentleman, will repair to the new address, when he learns that the flat at first selected is no longer vacant. Thus they will fail to meet—understand?"

"Yes; but later?"

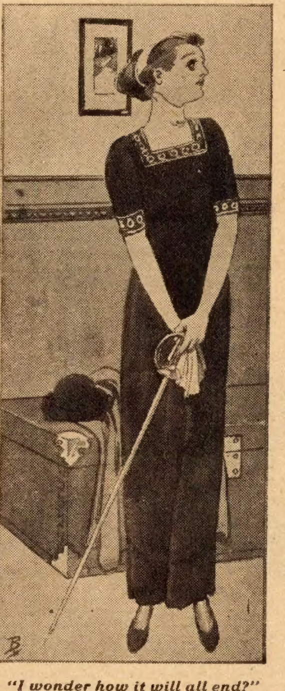
"I will take care of the future without your further assistance, Marie. But as you were instrumental in bringing affairs to this pass——"

"Oh, pardon, madam!" And Marie burst into tears.

"I am not censuring you, child; but I insist on your helping me to extricate us all from this mix-up. I intend it to be a battle of wits instead of swords; but if the latter must be used, then——" Her lips came together in a determined line, but she did not finish the sentence.

Marie believed she understood, and she decided to use her own wits, if need be, in an effort to overthrow her mistress' plans.

"You are a brainy woman, Marie, or you wouldn't be in my service. I don't like uneducated dolts, even for maids. You were foolishly infatuated with one who has proved to be unworthy. But I was negligent in my duty to you, as I should have looked into the matter more closely. I considered it none of my concern, and allowed you full freedom. If I had called my husband's attention to it, no doubt he would have discovered the true identity of the man, and you would have learned he was deceiving you before all this happened. At any rate, I would not now be under this suspicion."



"I wonder how it will all end?"

The letter that was to decoy the gentleman burglar to a place unknown to his antagonist was written and posted. And then Marie was asked to retire. On being left alone Estella went to a closet and took from an old chest a fencing costume and a sword, which she removed from its scabbard and inspected closely. From the chest she also took a long, circular cloak and a slouch hat. These she placed in a corner of the closet convenient to her hand, and turning out the electric light, went to bed.

"I wonder how it will come out," she said, musingly. "How can this tangle be straightened? Will Richard demand an explanation? And whether he does or not, I wonder if I shall ever forgive him. No matter, I will pay off the score I owe that villainous burglar. He cannot impeach my character and still live up to his false position in the world. Anyway, dead men tell no tales, and I may kill him. He deserves it."

She was quite calm when she began this train of thought, but her indignation rose as she recalled everything, and by the time she should have been asleep she was in a rage equal to anything she had ever felt before. It would have gone ill with James Northcote could she have faced him then as she meant to face him later. Richard Grant spent the night in restless slumber. Not that the coming encounter disturbed him; he believed he should worst his antagonist. It is a confidence in one's own prowess that makes men brave. Every man who does a brave or reckless deed entertains a serene belief that he will come out all right. And a man too cowardly to respond to a challenge of any sort is seldom met with.

Richard Grant had already been wounded—struck to the heart by his wife's perfidy. The fact that it was all a mistake did not matter in the least; it was as real to him as an actuality. And he suffered the tortures of the damned. Estella, his wife, whose innocence he would have staked his life on, was false to him, and that, too, in a secret, underhanded way.

Why did he not go to her and have it out? Why? he asked himself, should he suffer in silence, while she rested in self-complacency, not knowing her secret was discovered? Ah, why? He felt that he could not accuse her to her face; he could not look into those clear eyes and speak words of condemnation. Just in this instance he was a moral coward, he believed. Though with most people the greatest courage is required to refrain from accusation when deceived.

At last the long, dreary night came to an end; he arose with the first streak of dawn and sat on the edge of his bed, his elbows on his knees, his face in his hands, wondering how he should ever get through the day; how live until the hour came when he should meet the despoiler of his home face to face in mortal combat. He should kill him, he had no doubt of that, and no qualms of conscience. What came afterward did not matter. His life was ruined, and nothing remained of his happiness but dull gray ashes.

"Stella," he murmured, "how could you do it? She has not been near me," he continued, "she does not love me, has never done so. She little knows in what a position her intrigue with this man has placed me. If she knew of the duel that must take place tonight would she care, I wonder?"

It was because Estella did know of his belief in her faithlessness, that she kept away from him. And it was too late to prevent the meeting appointed, no matter what she said to him. A man does not go back on his word in a matter of that sort. Besides, she could not meet him just yet—and keep her temper. She had not gained sufficient control of herself since learning that he suspected her; and she believed love would be outraged beyond repair if once harsh words passed between them.

Richard spent the day in his office down town. For the most part he sat at his desk in abstraction, performing his duties in a half-hearted way. He was impatient for the night to descend and bring nearer the hour of his satisfaction. Would it really be any satisfaction to him to slay his enemy? He felt at that moment as if he could slay anybody—everybody! The madness was in his blood—it had been increasing ever since he read the fatal note and watched James Northcote, the "John Carver" of the letter, walk familiarly down his front steps.

As he recalled this incident he sprang from his seat so suddenly as to attract the attention of his stenographer. His eyes shone like blue steel, and the handsome mouth under the brown mustache twitched into the semblance of a snarl. But he quickly hid his telltale face, and the office boy and the stenographer who saw the look must have concluded that a spasm of illness had attacked him suddenly, and had as quickly departed.

He did not go home before his meeting with Northcote. The latter was to bring the weapons, and all he had to do was to appear at the place of meeting at the appointed time. He meant to play fair, but to be prepared for treachery; for would not a man who would crawl like a snake into the affections of another man's wife, be capable of treachery in any direction? So he slipped a silver-mounted revolver, which he took from the drawer of his desk, into the pocket of his coat. Then he closed his office and went out and wandered about the streets until the appointed hour arrived.

It was near midnight when he came into the house disgusted, furious, and almost stumbled over Marie in the hall, a circular cloak enveloping her slender form, her eyes wild and frightened. She had a slip of paper clenched in her hand

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on which a street and number were written.

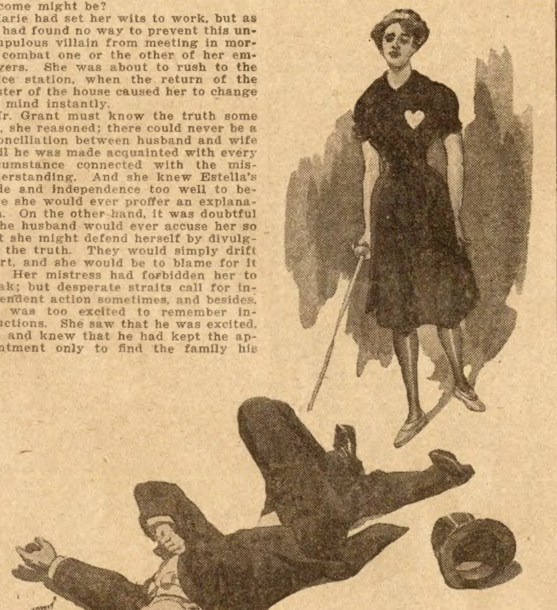
Richard Grant had been to the place of rendezvous and found it occupied, with lights flashing from every window. He believed it was some of Northcote's doing that he might avoid a duel because he was too cowardly to fight. His acceptance of the challenge had been merely a bluff, and he had probably decamped.

"It will be better for him if he never shows up!" he ground out between his teeth, just as he entered the hall, and nearly collided with his wife's paid companion and maid.

Marie was also desperate, for she believed her mistress to be in direst danger. She had found the address to which "John Carver" had been instructed to go to meet Mr. Grant—the place her mistress had chosen—lying crumpled upon the floor, and her quick understanding had told her that Mrs. Grant had memorized it, and flung the paper aside. This meant that she had gone herself to meet the wretch who, to screen himself, had insinuated to her husband that she was more than a friend to him. Knowing her mistress' innocence as she did, she felt that there was danger in the meeting that was about to take place between these two. A man of Carver's caliber would not hesitate to defend himself against a woman who demanded satisfaction, and who could tell what the outcome might be?

Marie had set her wits to work, but as yet had found no way to prevent this unscrupulous villain from meeting in mortal combat one or the other of her employers. She was about to rush to the police station, when the return of the master of the house caused her to change her mind instantly.

Mr. Grant must know the truth some day, she reasoned; there could never be a reconciliation between husband and wife until he was made acquainted with every circumstance connected with the misunderstanding. And she knew Estella's pride and independence too well to believe she would ever proffer an explanation. On the other hand, it was doubtful if the husband would ever accuse her so that she might defend herself by divulging the truth. They would simply drift apart, and she would be to blame for it all. Her mistress had forbidden her to speak; but desperate straits call for independent action sometimes, and besides, she was too excited to remember instructions. She saw that he was excited, too, and knew that he had kept the appointment only to find the family his wife had domiciled there instead of his antagonist.



He fell at her feet.

"Oh, sir!" she cried, when she heard his muttered words, "Listen to me! Your wife——" she choked on the words, she was almost afraid to tell.

He caught her by the shoulder and shook her almost roughly.

"What about my wife?" he articulated with difficulty. "Speak! Where is she?"

With trembling hands she handed him the slip of paper her mistress had dropped, and watched with burning eyes while he straightened out its crumpled folds in the light of the electric bulb.

"She has gone there—to that address—to meet John Carver," she gasped out. "She changed the place of meeting herself. I—I did not guess what for then; but now—now I know. She is missing, she has——"

She broke the sentence off abruptly, for there was a gurgling cry from the throat of the man before her as he staggered against the wall. His face was gray as ashes in the hall light.

"She has eloped—with him! My God!"

Marie saw the impression she had given him, and caught him by the arm. "No, no!" she cried, giving him a little shake to arouse him from his trance of despair; "not that—but almost as bad! She has gone to take your place, to defend her own good name and punish the man who dared to cast a suspicion upon her to you. Don't you understand? She is innocent! You have misjudged her! dared to believe her false to you, while all the while it was I who was degraded enough to be John Carver's sweetheart!"

He stared at her in bewilderment.

"She wrote the letter that has made all the trouble for me," Marie explained, "at my request. It was he—that burglar—who planned it all. But I did not know his object—before Heaven, I did not understand! I was a fool, maybe, but not a wicked girl. Now, come help me to save her!"

"Yes, yes!" he cried, opening the door and dashing out. "Give me the slip of paper," he added, turning back in a flurry; "I must have dropped it."

"It is a plot," Marie said, as she found and placed in his hand the paper containing the address to which his wife had gone to keep his appointment, and fight the villain who had traduced her to her husband. "Your wife knows all."

"She will never speak to me again," he said.

"Be brave," admonished Marie, "and swear you did not believe it, that you had no real suspicions. Hatch up some sort of story to explain your coldness of the last two days."

"And be a coward? Never!"

"No, have the courage to lie like a man," she advised.

But he had gone out into the night, and Marie was left to wonder if he had even heard her peculiar advice. The hour of midnight chimed from the tall grandfather's clock almost at her elbow. She started and trembled. It was the exact time for the duel to begin. And she had sent Mr. Grant straight to his enemy, when she should have sent the police. The very thing that her mistress had risked so much to prevent—the meeting between the two men—she had brought about, and the duel was now inevitable. There would be murder done this night! But what else could she have done? She could not leave her mistress to fall into that man's power.

She had mistrusted Mrs. Grant's intention when she remembered her boast concerning her ability with the weapons chosen, and her disparagement of the men's proficiency. She was thinking wholly of Mrs. Grant's safety when she sent her husband straight into the danger his wife was trying to shield him from. And now what was to be done? Was it too late to save them both?

CHAPTER V.

THE DUEL.

The place chosen by Estella Grant for a rendezvous was in an opposite direction from that appointed by the men when arrangements for a fight with silent weapons were made. She had visited a real estate agent, and had experienced no difficulty in finding a vacant building somewhat isolated. And agreeing to inspect it the next day with a view to its purchase, if it pleased her, she took down the street and number, obtained possession of the keys, and then went home to have the maid send a letter to a certain gentlemanly rascal, requesting him to be at the new address at the appointed hour that the fight might not be delayed.

And believing he would be publicly disgraced by his furious opponent if he failed to keep the appointment, James Northcote, alias John Carver, went to the place designated in the letter expecting to kill Richard Grant and escape detection. He was not cowardly in matters of this sort, otherwise his profession would have been abandoned long ago for one with less risks.

The building was dark and silent when he reached it and cautiously opened the back door with a skeleton key. He did not fear treachery from Richard Grant. There is a certain code of honor

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men of his type live up to in these matters, and he knew he would be incapable of anything but a fair fight. And so he took no weapons except the two blades which he carried concealed as much as possible beneath his coat.

Finding no one on the first floor he made his way by the light of a small electric torch up the stairway, and there paused to take a survey of things. From under one of the doors across the corridor streamed a glow of light as from a kerosene lamp. He pushed open the door and stepped in. He saw that the shutters were closed, and though the room was faintly lighted there was no one in sight. He closed the door behind him. As he did so a figure partially concealed by a long dark cloak and slouch hat stepped forth from a closet and confronted him. His instinct told him it was not the right person—not the one he expected to meet—but he did not speak. He was puzzled, but not suspicious. He believed that Richard Grant would meet him in fair fight, and that this person was an interloper.

Then Estella stepped forward and flung aside the cloak and hat. In her right hand was a sword still in its scabbard. The truth, or part of it, began to dawn upon the man—she had come to take her husband's place in the duel. He did not for one moment believe that this mad freak on the part of his wife was known to Mr. Grant; but he led her to think that that was his belief. His dark face grew darker, and his beardless lips took on a sneer.

"And so Richard Grant expects me to fight a woman—his wife!"

Her eyes, at times so soft and fawnlike, were suddenly alive with an angry fire.

"My husband knows nothing of my presence here, or of the change in your plans as to the place of meeting. And no one knows better than you how anxious he is to meet you in a duel to the death. And he would have killed you, too, if I had not outwitted him. But I reserve that privilege for myself. I am something of a new woman, at least I am an independent one. And I hold that I have a right to protect my own honor, to punish any one who attempts to besmirch my reputation, even to my husband. A man who can insinuate that he is intimate with a woman to that woman's husband, merely to protect himself against exposure of his double life, is not above fighting with the woman he has brought under suspicions—even if he is cowardly enough to refuse to do so."

Her voice rang out, not loud, but clear-cut, in the empty apartment. She wanted to goad him to uncontrollable anger, lest otherwise he should refuse to defend himself against her, in which case she could do nothing. She whipped her sword from its scabbard, and the lamplight fell on its shining blade.

"On guard!" she cried. "You will have a foe worthy of your steel!"

"I shall do nothing of the sort," he said, quietly, leaning against the wall in a nonchalant, gentlemanly attitude, and smiling in a bored way.

Though a burglar, he was also a society man, the better, perhaps, to become familiar with houses he meant to burglarize. He was in evening clothes, and he looked very handsome at that moment. Estella studied his face thoughtfully.

"No wonder Marie was taken in," she mused; "he is really handsome, and has an air of distinction about him. Poor Marie! the awakening must have cost her a terrible heart-pang."

Following this thought came a realization of all his dastardly conduct, the most cowardly part of which was the net he had woven about her that he might place himself in a position to use her as a shield between him and exposure of his calling to the public he preyed upon. But of course a man who would steal jewelry would not hesitate to steal a husband's faith in his wife, when it was for his own protection.

James Northcote, gentleman—otherwise "John Carver," burglar—who had come directly from an evening entertainment to this place, and who was at his best in the matter of appearance, saw the swift flash of admiration in the eyes of the woman who had come to slay him, according to her avowed intention, and smiled complacently. He did not credit her words now. His vanity made him believe them only an excuse for a secret meeting with him.

"By my troth, she is a beauty!" he thought. "A perfect jewel! What a joke it would be if I should steal this fellow's wife instead of the pearls I failed to obtain! And I could love a woman like this one—a woman with a complexion like roses and cream, and a spirit that would dare what she has dared tonight—and just for the pleasure of seeing me!"

What else could he think? No woman would be so foolhardy as to attempt a duel with swords with a man; or so lacking in knowledge of masculine character as to believe any man would fight with a lady. It was a fake, of course, and she expected it to end in his making love to her. Well, he should not be deceived by her assumed attitude of hostility. A man of this sort can believe anything his vanity suggests. Therefore, he did not move, except to assume a more striking position, his eyes fixed on her face with growing admiration. She spoke again, impatiently, disgustedly:

"Unsheath your sword, villain! and get ready to defend yourself. I came here to punish you, and so help me Heaven, I will do it! If you refuse to fight, then I will kill you as I would any other creeping crawling thing! I think all reptiles should be killed for the benefit of the people at large. Time is passing. Prepare!"

He took a few steps forward and leered at her. He thought the covetous glance from which she recoiled a fetching one, and that her attitude toward him was only feigned; while all the while a storm was rising within her—had risen—was raging and seething, and would eventually break into a tempest that would sweep everything before it.

"To die at your hands would be a pleasure, my dear madam," he replied, with a flourishing bow calculated to impress her with its profundity; "but a greater pleasure to live and enjoy your society—to possess you. Throw away your weapon and come with me. The earth is wide—my profession is as lucrative in one land as in another. Do you want gems? You shall have them! Should you admire the diamonds of a princess, I will get them for you! And I shall not be captured to bring disgrace and humiliation upon you. I prevent all that—you know how. See how it has worked in your case; neither you nor your husband will expose me."

Sheer surprise had kept her dumb until this moment, and he had had his say.

"No, but one of us will kill you!" she hissed between lips that were tense with emotion. The strain of keeping silent and hearing him out had brought every nerve to a tension. Something would give way if this forced inaction was kept up much longer, and she would not be responsible for what happened. There was blood upon her lips where she had set her teeth while anger boiled within her. One might imagine there was foam also—so much like one of the Furies she looked at that moment.

"You cur!" she cried, at last.

It was all she could say just then, for the full realization of the indignity put upon her, the insult added to injury by this man—or this thing that passed for a man, even a gentleman—held her spellbound. Verily, Richard might fight his own battles after this, might even get killed before she would interfere and subject herself to such indignity. Oh, the humiliation of it! A sudden hysteria seized her, she was about to fling her weapon down and flee, let the outcome be what it might, rather than endure his presence longer. But his next words changed her attitude entirely.

"I love you!" he said. "I adore you! In this half-hour I have discovered the one woman for me. I would die for you. There is nothing you could not demand at my hands." He flung open his arms. "Come!" he said. "My love——"

It was then she struck him down in the blindness of her fury, even as the words left his lips she made a lunge at his heart. But she was too far away, and her foot slipped as she flung herself forward, so that her aim went wild and the blade merely pierced his shoulder. He fell forward at her feet with a groan, and she thought him dead.

Estella Grant stood transfixed with horror at her deed. She had meant to kill him, but now it was done, what should she do? The rage died down within her, and she stood white and frightened, leaning against the door of the closet from which she had emerged so short a time before to confront the man who had sought to work her injury. She was limp and trembling. To increase her terror she heard footsteps coming up the stairs—leaping, bounding steps—so that but a few seconds had elapsed before the door was flung open and the form of a man appeared on the threshold.

"Stella!"

It was Richard Grant, and his swift gaze took in the situation at once.

"Oh, Dick!" she gasped, and ran to him, everything forgotten, save that he was her refuge.

The man on the floor stirred and moaned.

"Stella, my darling! What has happened? Don't tremble so! Wait, I will look to his wound," for his eyes had caught sight of a bloodstain upon the floor.

He bent over to lift the wounded man, but sprang erect instantly and drew his wife to his side. Hastily he wrapped the fallen cloak about her and drew the hat well down over her head. Then, with a swift movement, he placed the sword in its sheath, and hiding it beneath his outer coat, he drew her through the closet, which communicated with another room, and toward a back staircase, and so on out onto the street. He had heard the tramping of feet on the front walk, and his quick understanding had scented the presence of the police. He knew instantly that Marie had telephoned and had them sent to this place. He must shield his wife at all hazards, and leave the wounded man to be looked after by the authorities of the law. That James Northcote would be silent concerning his experiences with Estella he had no doubt, for there was his midnight intrusion into their home, his attempted robbery, to be answered for if he betrayed her.

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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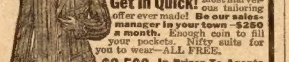

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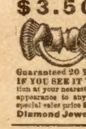

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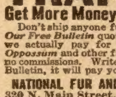

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Alice Clement, Detective

A RIGHTED WRONG

By Courtney R. Cooper

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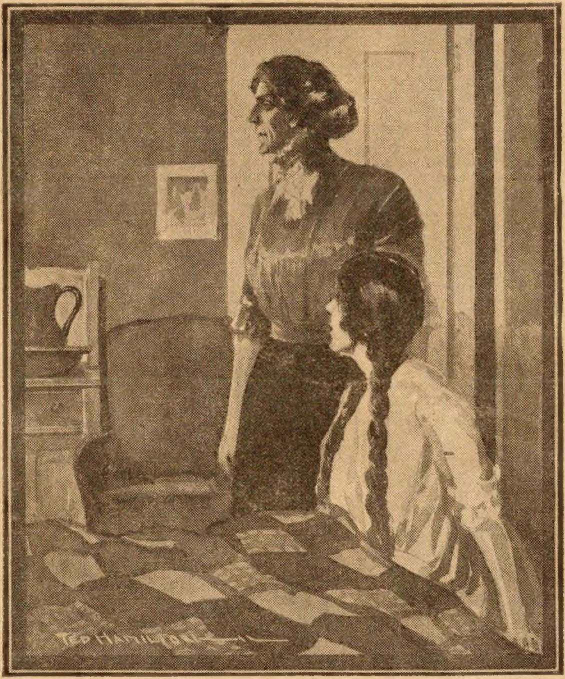
(Editor's Note—On the payroll of the municipal detective department of the city of Chicago appears the name of Alice Clement, sleuth. To the trackers of men who make their headquarters at the bureau at 179 North La Salle street, she is known as "Alice of the Smile." Fearless, resourceful, dangerous in a hundred simple little disguises which mask her, yet do not hinder her, she has found the evidence which has sent many a man and many a woman to the penitentiary. There is hardly a dangerous dive of the great city which she, in her twelve years of detective life, has not visited. More than once has her life been in danger, many times has she been compelled to use the dirk or the revolver that she carries for protection. And yet, through it all, she has remained pretty, vivacious, full of life and the love of living—and always deserving of her name, "Alice of the Smile." Too, she has always remained reticent, non-communicative about her adventures, until Mr. Cooper persuaded her to tell her adventures for the first time.)

I HAD listened to the orchestra, I had nodded over a letter as I sat in the mezzanine balcony of one of Chicago's great hotels; I had watched the crowd in the lobby below until my eyes were tired—and still Miss Clement, due long before, had not arrived. I waited another fifteen minutes—another twenty—and then, from the elevator there emerged a small, trimly dressed woman whose face was that of happiness and whose whole being spoke of joy.



"It made me feel better for the game I had to play."

"I've been having more fun," she said, excitedly.

"It looks that way," I answered, jokingly, holding up my watch.

She seated herself beside me and began pulling off her gloves.

"Haven't seen the inside of a police station today," she began. "Instead, I've been doing—guess what?"

"I'll give up."

"I've been judge at a baby show. And there were more cute little kiddies there than I ever saw before in my life. It reminded me of when my own little girl used to be about that size, and when——"

Suddenly she stopped and looked at me laughingly.

"All of which reminds me of a story," she added, and then without waiting for the request she knew was sure to come, she began the telling of it.

"It was shortly after I had gone on the force. One morning I walked into the office, looked in the mailbox, and pulled forth a letter from the captain, addressed to me. It told me that I had been borrowed by an attorney from the police force for a few days, and that I was to report to him. And incidentally, let me say right now before I mention any names, that of course they will all be changed. I don't like this business of holding up a person's real name after a thing's all over and probably forgotten about by every one except those vitally concerned."

A look of seriousness came into the eyes with that, and I remembered, as the little woman at my side raised a hand to wave it daintily in time with the music of the hotel orchestra, that there had never been a time when she did not shield the real names of those with whom she had come in contact in her detective career. And for that bit of soft-heartedness toward the less fortunate of this morbid old world's people, I respected her. The music was lulling a bit. Miss Clement began the active recital of her story.

"When I got over to the Chamber of Commerce Building, I met my lawyer employer and was taken to his office. And then for the first time I learned of the case on which I was going to work.

"It seemed that a very rich man named Edwards had died, with an estate so tied up by the will of his father that it died with him. He was survived by his widow and one daughter, thought to have been adopted. Edwards himself had been prohibited from making any kind of a will. The estate must go on to the next direct heir, if there was one, or to the wife. The attorney told me that he felt sure that there was a direct heir, since adoption could be classed that way, but there was nothing to show for it. Since her foster father's death, the girl, who believed she had been adopted in early infancy, had been cast out by the foster mother, who had claimed all the estate. There were no papers to back up the girl's claim. All the mother would say was that the girl merely had been taken in and that she had never been legally adopted. And so, since the will of the grandfather insisted that legal papers were necessary, there seemed to be little chance for the girl to get any share of the money.

"A pretty little thing she was, too, about nineteen, with brown wavy hair, eyes that were as blue and as deep as the ocean, with a heart that was clean and pure. Until the time of her foster father's death, Louise Edwards had never known what it was to want for anything. Luxury had been hers—until death had intervened. Then everything had changed. Mrs. Edwards was of a different type from her husband. Morbid, cold-hearted, mercenary, she had driven the girl out, had denied herself to every one, and was now locked in the Edwards mansion, refusing to see any one concerning the case, determined that there should be no chance of the girl ever learning whether

(Continued on page eleven.)

Modest Millionaire.

E. F. Swinney, president of the First National Bank of Kansas City, was born in the South. He goes back home once or twice a year and it is part of the homecoming program to have Old Mose polish his shoes. Old Mose prides himself on the fact that he has known "Misteh Eddie" since he was born—and "his daddy befo' him."

When Mr. Swinney was there recently Mose was polishing his shoes. He stopped and asked:

"Misteh Eddie, how much is a million dollahs?"

"Well, Mose," Mr. Swinney replied, "you have seen ten silver dollars, haven't you? Now, imagine ten of those stacks and you have $100. Then ten times that and you have $1,000. Then ten times that and you have $10,000—and one hundred times that and you have $1,000,000."

"Misteh Eddie," continued Mose, exceedingly troubled, "would all them silver dollars go on that table yondah?"

"No, Mose—not if they were piled to the ceiling. What would you do if you had 1,000,000 silver dollars, Mose?"

Mose stopped shining. He pondered for a minute. Then he said:

"Well, Misteh Eddie, I reckon I'd have mah cistehn cleaned out."

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(Continued from page ten.)

or not she ever had been legally adopted.

"'And there,' said the attorney, when he had finished his story to me, 'is your case. I want you to see Mrs. Edwards some way and find out from her whether or not this little girl deserves a share of that estate. I feel sure she does; I believe that old Edwards legally adopted her, but we have been unable to get at the facts. Now, Miss Clement, it is up to you.'

"I looked at him and laughed.

"'It's just about as easy as catching a counterfeit in Africa,' I said, 'but I'll try anything on earth once. Do you think you can borrow me a six months' old baby somewhere? My little girl is too old.'

"'A what?' The attorney looked surprised.

"'A six months' old baby.'

"'What do you want it for?'

"I laughed at him again. If there is anything I do like, it's my little joke when I am looking ahead on a case, and when the other person doesn't just see what I am driving at. And so I left him guessing.

"'Have me the baby at my house at two o'clock in the afternoon, four days from today. I'll not be ready to work before then.'

"'But, Miss Clement, four days——"

"'Is the least time in which I can get started. If you want me to handle the case I'll handle it, and I believe that I will win. But I cannot begin to work before four days from today.'

"'Very well,' he answered, at last, 'you know best. I will get a baby somewhere but the good Lord only knows where.'

"And then I left him. When I got to my flat, I called in a neighbor and gave my instructions.

"'I won't be able to be around cooking for a good while; I don't think I would be able to stand it,' I told her, 'and so, will you take my little girl over to your place for a week or so?'

"'Why, certainly,' she answered, 'but w——'

"'I'm going to starve myself,' I answered. 'I am working on a case. That's all I can tell you. Will you do the favor for me?'

"And so, that day I started in to fast for ninety-six hours. I had planned ahead everything that I intended to do, and I believed that the only possible way to win the thing on which I had set out was to proceed in exactly the manner I was doing. And so, food, good-by.

"The first day was not so bad. The second was harder. On the third I had to lock myself in my room, and by the fourth day I was really in the condition that I desired to be, pale, weakened, and suffering for lack of food. How those hours dragged by while I waited for the appearance of the attorney and the child which he was to borrow for me! It seemed that two o'clock would never come. It seemed that every minute had become a day. I remember that I counted the ticking of the clock, hundred after hundred, thousand after thousand—and then there came a ring on the bell.

"The attorney started a bit when he saw my face. I tried to smile at him, but there was not much smiling in me. Yet, my brain was alert, quick, ready to do all that I had planned for it and I set to work

"I had dressed myself in rags. I had more rags for the baby that the lawyer had brought for me, and an hour later a creeping woman walked up the street of the Edwards' home, begging from door to door.

"But some way or another," Miss Clement added, with a little smile, as the music crashed forth from the opposite balcony, "that very same woman was repulsed at every house. At last came the Edwards' mansion. And there was the time for work, real work, if there ever was such a thing.

"Wearily—and there was no faking to that, either—I dragged myself, with the baby, around the side of the house and to the kitchen door. I knocked. A servant opened the door and looked at me with frightened eyes. I staggered within. I sank to a chair. I gasped for breath.

"'Can't you give me food," I begged. 'I have had nothing to eat for four days We are starving, the baby and myself—can't you help us?'

"The servant, a kindly faced old Irish woman, raised her hands. Then with a leap, she began setting food before me I suppose the sight of it was too much for me in my weakened state. I shall always be thankful that she took the baby from my arms just when she did, for a moment later, I had rolled from my chair to the floor, in a faint

"When I came to, I was in another room of the house, with the old Irish woman bending over me, feeding me broth. And how it did taste! I don't believe that ambrosia could have been any better—I know that I would not have traded it for that soup. And as I ate, there came a feeling of sneakiness into my heart, that I had come to this place to really take money away from the employer of this woman who had been kind to me. It made me grit my teeth. For once I was sorry that I was a detective

"I looked up just then The kind old cook's hand was on my head and she was talking to me

"'I've put th' little darlint in a cradle—an old thing but comfortable,' she said, 'an' bless me, th' spalpeen wint to slape, jūst like that!' She snapped her fingers. 'I'll have to call the Missus. She was in here an' she wanted to talk to you when you waked up.'

"A moment later, a hard-faced, old-maidish type of woman walked into the room. I could see by her eyes, by the set of her jaw, by her whole appearance, that there was mighty little of the womanly, mighty little of the motherly, in her. And it made me feel better for the game that I had to play. For, I knew within my heart, that if I could succeed in what I had set out to accomplish, that I would not be harming her, but benefiting her, by giving her a new viewpoint in life. Anxiously I waited for her to ask the question that would give me the starting chance. But she had other things on her mind.

"'Young woman,' she began severely, 'I suppose you have no objection to being taken away in a police ambulance?'

"I looked up with fright on my face.

"'Arrested?' I asked, as piteously as I could.

"'No—no,' she said in staccato tones, 'not arrested. I said nothing about you being arrested. But you must realize that you cannot stay here. I have no place for you. I know nothing about you. My woman has done everything for you that you could expect, and so I am going to call the police ambulance or something of the kind to take you away.'

"Tears were not hard for me right then. Weakness had sapped me, hunger had ridden me, and weeping was not a hard task. I allowed my head to fall back on the pillow, and the sobs shook my body. Mrs. Edwards folded her hands and regarded me

"'Well—' she said slowly, 'well—well—well! You must have been having a very hard time. I'm sorry. Can't be helped, however. Can't be helped. I'll call the ambulance.'

"She started out of the room. I called to her and asked her to stop.

"'Please,' I begged, 'don't do that I'll be in their hands soon enough, I guess. But as long as I can keep going, I want to do it. Something will turn up to help me along. You have already helped me a lot. Just let me rest here a while—won't you? And then I'll take baby and go on again.'

"She paused and considered. Then she seated herself in a chair near me, gazed at me studiously with those hard cold eyes of hers and asked:

"'Young woman, how did you happen to get into a fix like this?'

"It was the chance that I had been waiting for. I raised myself weakly and looked at her.

"'My mother sent me here,' I answered.

"'Your mother?'

"'My mother. Or, rather,' I smiled faintly, 'my foster mother. I was taken to a home when I was a child. I never knew who my real parents were. I never was told. I never knew the touch of a real mother's lips. I never knew what it was to feel that unbounded love which a real mother could give. I was just a little outcast into the world—and I was taken to a home.'

"I stopped speaking a moment to see whether or not that first shot had had any effect on the woman. Her face was as hard and cold as ever.

"'I don't quite understand,' she said, at last. 'Go on.'

"I knew that a hard task was before me. If I was to touch this heart, I would have to employ every bit of theatrical art that was in my nature. I summoned tears as I began again.

"'As I told you, I was just a little foundling, left on a doorstep by some woman whose face I cannot remember, whose face I shall never see again. I was taken into the home of a middle-aged couple in New York City. They cared for me, the father seemed to love me with a kindness that was supreme. He would fondle me, he would take me into his arms, he would walk with me and play with me in the afternoons, he would tell me stories by the light of the fire at night. But stretch out my arms as I would, plead as I might, never was there a glance of love, never a look of kindness from the wife. And how a child longs for the fondling of a good woman! How a child misses it! How the whole being of the little heart cries out for what it craves and cannot have! Many was the time that I would go to that woman with tears in my eyes and beg to be taken up into her lap. The answer would usually be a sneer, a shove away.'

"I paused again. The woman was looking at me rather queerly. I wondered whether she had guessed the object of my story. I endeavored to read her face—it was impossible of interpretation. I began again

"'And so the years went on. As I grew up, my foster father gave me every luxury, he saw that I was well schooled, that I was well dressed and well cared for. As far as money went, there was nothing I could ask for and be denied As far as he was concerned with love, there was nothing that could be desired more. But still the mother continued with me, hard, cold, relentless in her evident desire to make the world miserable for me. What on earth she had ever consented to taking me in for. I

(Continued on page [illegible])

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Specialist in Ear Troubles

Within the last few days many, many Deaf people have asked me to repeat the free offer which I made in The Chicago Ledger last month to all Deafness sufferers.

The letters have been filled with the most pitiful appeals for help. They have told me of the terrible loneliness, the cruel setting aside of the sufferer from the active pleasures and duties of life. "I would rather die, Doctor, than be Deaf, but I know I am doomed" is the burden of many a letter.

Were I to think of only this side of the picture I should be desperate. But every one of the letters contained also this: "A friend of mine was cured of Deafness by your treatment. Please repeat again that offer of Deafness Treatment Free, that I, too, may see your method. Surely what you have done for others you can do for me."

I have sent the Free treatments. I know only too well with what heartburnings of discouragement the person with the at-first occasional noises in the ear—the occasional Deaf cold—the gradual loss of keen hearing—realizes that he or she is slowly, but surely being imprisoned in a tomb of silence, none the less horrible because of the forewarnings. And so, thankful as I am to help these friends of my cured patients, I cannot rest until I say again

TO ALL WHO ARE DEAF

I will give away Free treatment for Deafness to every Deaf person who asks for it.

You who are Deaf—don't hesitate—don't delay, but get pen and ink or a pencil—write on any sort of paper—a postcard is just the thing **Please send me your Free treatment for Deafness**—Sign your name and address and send it to me.

When your letter reaches me, I will send you one of the treatments free. My treatment has restored good hearing to hundreds and hundreds. Why should it not do the same for you?

It doesn't matter how slight your Deafness is—how severe it is—how long you have had it—send for a treatment. Many have been cured who thought their cases hopeless. I won't tell you about the treatment, because I want you to see for yourself—note its results in your own case. If you had answered my previous offer, you might have now been in the blessed possession of good hearing. Don't miss this opportunity, but write right now for a Deafness Treatment. It is free. Write

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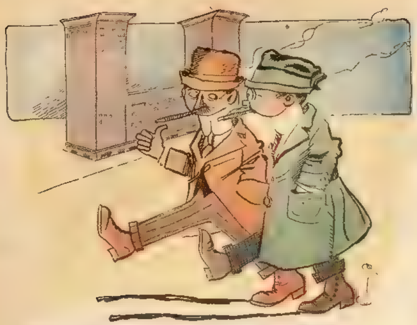


"T[illegible] a regular fire trap
"It doesn't look it
"Can't help it; nearly every fellow that gets a job there gets fired"

Only Fair.

"Henrietta," said Mr. Meekton
What is it, Leonidas'

"Suppose I stay at home and economize in order to facilitate your public career and employ my leisure hours in assisting you with your speeches and magazine articles —"

"Well?"

"When you are prominent in public affairs, will you be one of those who candidly admit that they owe everything to their husbands?'

Blasted Hopes.

The hunter had mistakenly shot a guide

"What is your name?" asked the hunter bending down eagerly

'Smith!' gasped the guide with his last breath

The hunter's face fell

"And I came up here,' he exclaimed ruefully, "in pursuit of rare game. —Puck

An Exaggerated Impression.

Porter," said the nervous passenger, "why does the locomotive keep up that infernal whistling?

I dunno," replied the New York colored youth who was on his first trip, "but I understand we is approachin' Philadelphia, an' I specks de engineer is trying to wake up de folks"

A Very Important Event.

"What do you consider the most important event in the history of Paris?"

"Well," replied the tourist, who had grown weary of distributing tips, "so far as financial prosperity is concerned, I should say the discovery of America was the making of this town."

Envy.

Bald One—"I would give anything for your splendid head of hair."

Woolly One—"Would you, really?"

Bald One—Yes, I would like to go to the barber shop just once and feel that I am getting my money's worth"

Re-Search All Right.

Bill—"Have you done any research work?"

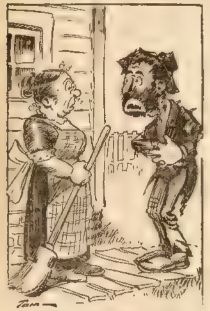
Jill—Have I? Well, say, I've looked for this same collar button I'm wearing now at least fifty times'

Sardonic Glee.

"I got a new attachment for the family piano," said Mr. Growcher, 'and it's a wonderful improvement"

"What is it?"

'A lock and key.'



Trampson—"Could I have a piece of bread and a cup of coffee, madam? I haven't had a bite for three days

Housewife—'Mercy! What have you been living on then?"

Trampson—"I've been licking the steam from off the bakery windows"

Closing the Deal.

"What is the price of a half-pint bottle?" asked a prospective customer

"A nickel," answered the druggist handing the desired article across the counter. "But it costs you nothing if I put something into it

"Then put in a cork, please," responded the customer.

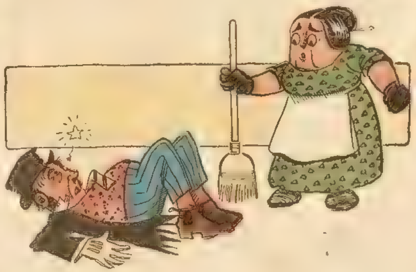
Both Use Them.

Redd—"Don't you think the cost of living is increasing?

Greene—"Oh, yes; I used to keep a horse, and now I've got an automobile."

"What's that got to do with it?"

It costs me more for shoes."



Mrs Strongarm—"I'm real sorry I beat you up so, mister. I mistook you for my landlord"

Mr. Lemmy Peck—"I accept your apology madam I'm glad you didn't mistake me for your husband"

Supply Cut Off.

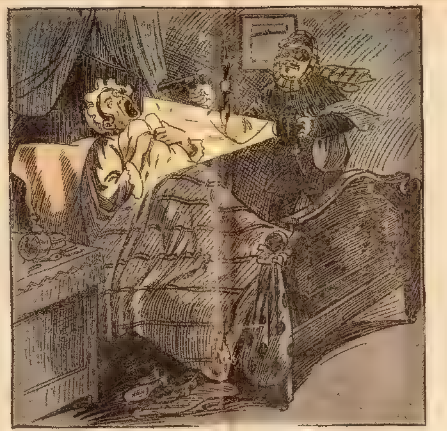
Mister—My dear little boy, why don't you carry an umbrella when it is raining like this

Dear Little Boy—"Since pa has stopped going to church he never brings home any more umbrellas

An Extreme Case.

How's your insomnia, Slocum?"

Worse and worse. I can't even sleep when it's time to get up."



Miss Withers (suddenly awakened)—"O-o-o-h! D-o-o y-o-u want to take my money?

The Burglar—"Yes; and if yer make der least sound I'll take you!"

Miss Withers (at the top of her voice)—'Murder! Police! Police! P-o-l-i-c-e!"

WHEN NELLIE DRESSES.

When Nellie goes upstairs to dress,
I take a magazine,
And read about the wonders of
Some far off foreign scene
An article on men who graft,
The Wall street system, too;
Also the editor's remarks
On what next month he'll do.

I light my pipe and puff away
The while the page I scan
And read a Robert Chambers tale
About some love-sick man
A muck-rake expert leads me through
A bale of torrid stuff
Explaining how a lot of men
Got rich upon a bluff

I read the advertisements next,
Of collars, kodaks, cars,
And breakfast foods and underwear,
Tobacco and cigars
A liberal education I
Obtain, I must confess,
The evening we are going out
And Nellie starts to dress.

The Stingy Kind.

'What kind o' mon is MacPherson?"

"Weel, I was in his hoose ae day, an he was poorin' me out a drram, an' I said stop, an' he stoppit—that's the kind o' mon is MacPherson'

His Punishment.

My husband considered a very long time before he proposed to me. He was very careful."

"Ah, it's always those careful people who get taken in!"

Timely Warning

Caddy (to motorist who had run over crusty old golfer)—I'd clear oot afore he gets his wind back if I was you

Motorist—Why?

Caddy—Weel, maybe ye hivna heard him playing gowf.

Guess What.

Tom—Yes Miss Roxley and I are strangers now. I've been asked not to call there again

Jack—I'll bet old Roxley had a hand in that.

Tom—Well—er—not a hand exactly

Not Always.

'One reaps what one sows."

"Allow me to differ with you.'

'How so?"

"When one sows wild oats one generally reaps a crop of lemons'

Was Worth It.

Solomon Pitman, a backwoodsman, had been caught on the jury in town and was boarding with a lady who was running a cheap boarding-house. Astonished at the amount of butter Sol was eating, she said

Sol, that butter cost me twenty-five cents a pound'

Yes ma'am," said he, taking another large slice, "and it's worth every cent of it

Tried Moral Suasion.

Hoosier Schoolmaster—"Don't do any whipping here, eh?

Eastern Pedagogue—"No; we use moral suasion'

Hoosier Schoolmaster—"Moral suasion eh? I tried that in Indiana, but it made a heap of trouble The girls didn't object to the kissing, but the old folks cut up like all possessed.

Another Bargain.

"Charley, dear," said young Mrs. Torkins, "did you say those blue chips were worth one dollar apiece?"

Yes

"Well, here is a whole boxful I got for ninety-eight cents, with some other colors thrown in

Found a Sure Way.

Did you take the cold plunge your doctor ordered?"

Yes. I didn't think I'd have the nerve but I managed it."

How?

Bought myself a canoe."

Not Real.

"Now, boys," said the schoolmaster "what is the axis of the earth?

Johnny raised his hand promptly.

"Well, Johnny, how would you describe it?"

"The axis of the earth," said Johnny, proudly, "is an imaginary line which passes from one pole to the other, and on which the earth revolves."

"Very good," exclaimed the teacher "Now, could you hang clothes on that line, Johnny?"

'Yes, sir,' was the reply

"Indeed!' said the examiner, disappointed. "And what sort of clothes?'

"Imaginary clothes, sir '

Knew Her Hubby.

Mother—"Is your letter to your husband ready to mail?

Married Daughter—"It's all done excepting the postscript, telling him to send me some more money. I'm looking for another sheet of paper"

Write it across the lines.'

"No, indeed. He'll pretend he couldn't read it '

Too Soon to Tell.

"Now that your son is through college what are you going to make of him?

'Can't tell for a couple of years. He went to a co-ed institution, and he's booked up for two years solid to act as an usher at weddings

He Was Right, at That.

Hub—"Has your new dress come home yet?'

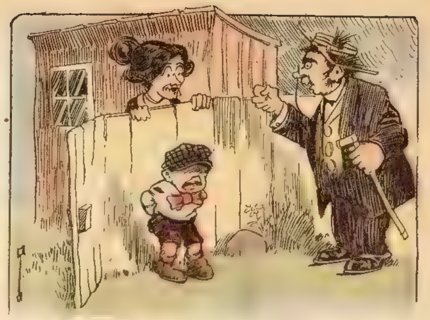
Wife—"Not yet; the dressmaker is putting the finishing touches on it"

Hub—"Oh, I supposed that I was to get the finishing touch.'

Benefited.

"Have you been benefited by your experiments in aviation?

Yes. They have made me appreciate the comfort and security of railway travel"



Angry Man—Woman, your boy threw rocks at me'
Sweet Ma—"Why, don't you know, Artie is just in the stone age."

Very Unusual.

Patience—'So you think he is a very unusual man?'

Patrice—"Yes, I do."

'Why?

"Because I saw him open a car window the first time he tried yesterday."

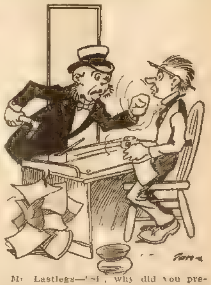
Knew Chicago.

"Going to get out here and stretch your legs?' asked the traveling man of his companion as the train stopped.

"What place is it?' inquired the other

"Chicago.

'No, I had one leg stretched here once"



Mr Lastlegs—'Sir, why did you presume to announce my daughter's engagement to Mr. Goldstock on the sporting page of your paper?"

The Editor—"We considered that the proper place. You see, their friends have been doing a lot of betting as to whether or not she'd land him"

Just in Time.

Friend—I suppose it was hard to lose your daughter?'

Father—"Well, it did seem as if it would be at one time, but she landed this fellow just as we were beginning to give up hope"

Words of Weight.

"The ancients used to write in clay and then bake it

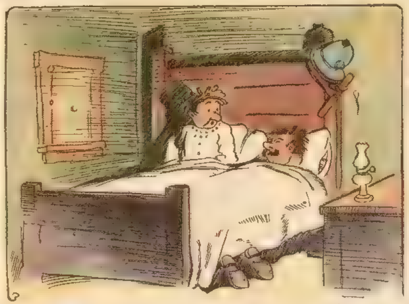
'Yes replied the man who was reading the latest speech 'In those days when they spoke of hurling epithets at a man it meant something'

Saving Money.

Mr Hardhead—"I saved a big pile of money today."

Mrs. H.—"That is lovely' How?"

Mr H—"Instead of suing a man, for what he owed me, I let him have it."



Policeman's Wife—[illegible] there's a burglar under the bed."
Policeman—"Well, holler for a cop. I'm off duty'

An Embarrassing Question.

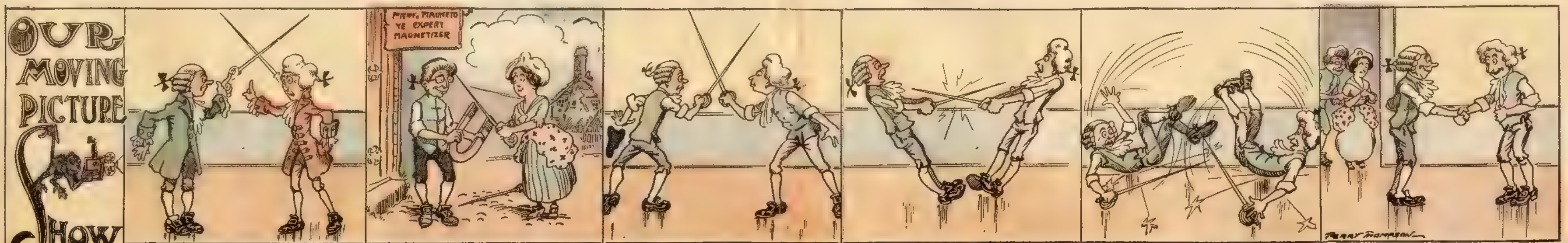
Bobby—"Uncle, couldn't a fellow have a fine Sunday's dinner if he was as hungry as me an' as roomy as you?"

An Old Neighborhood.

'You live in an old, retired neighborhood, don't you?

'Yes, indeed Every one of our neighbors has long since got over the idea that he can save money by raising his own chickens"

AN AFFAIR OF HONOR.



The Rivals "Tonight at ten we shall meet here and with those swords decide who shall win the fair Marie."

Marie—"Claude and Philip are going to fight a duel to-night with these swords. We must fix it so they can do no harm."

The Rivals—'On your guard there! Have at you, scoundrel One, two, three!"

"Gadzooks! What villainy is this? What ails the blades'
"Leggo, coward—dog!——"

(Bump—Thump)
"Oof! Ugh! Haw, haw haw —good joke on you!"

The Prof—"Ha! The magnet worked like a charm. See, they are friends again!
"Honor is satisfied."

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Alice Clement, Detective.

(Continued from page eleven.)

never could see. Certainly she never showed any human affection.'

"I lowered my voice.

"'There came the time,' I continued, 'when my foster father became ill for the last time. He called me to him one night, he pressed my hand in his poor, tired, pale one. His lips moved. He was trying to tell me something. I bent closer, I placed my ear to his very lips, and then I let a cry escape me. The heart was stilled forever. The only father I ever knew was dead.

"'A week passed by. All during the time of the funeral, all during the time of bereavement, of acute suffering, his wife had steadily refused to speak to me. I went to her one day; I steeled myself to be as brave as I could, and then I asked if he had made any provision for my future. A glare came into the hard, cold eyes. A steely smile parted the lips. 'No!' she answered, 'No, he has left no provision for you, but I have made some. You can make your home anywhere you want to, you can do what you please, but your time of sponging off this family is over. Now, leave!'

"'And that was my exit from the home that had been mine since infancy. I went to an attorney. He looked over the case, saw that I had no evidence of ever having been legally adopted and gave it up. The world was before me. Tender, unused to its ways, innocent, unknowing of the pitfalls that were before me, I must step out into it, I must fight my way alone, I must earn my living.

"'Well, I tried to be brave. From place to place I went, seeking work. It was denied me. I became a shopgirl. After a week I was discharged for incompetency. And then—then——'

"I closed my eyes. I lay back on the pillow.

"'What is the use of going into all the hideous story?' I begged. 'There is nothing that will do any good to tell. You can guess the rest. And now, here I am, lost to the world, lost to everything, a wreck of a woman—and all because human kindness, human duty was denied me. I did my best, I did my best.'

"I lay still on the bed. My eyes were still closed, and I hardly dared to open them. I wondered what effect my story had made on the woman, but after all the effort, after all the pain and suffering I had gone to that I might tell it, I was afraid to learn the result. I heard the chair in which the woman was sitting begin to rock back and forth, back and forth. At last she spoke.

"'That is your story,' she asked slowly.

"'Yes.'

"'Did you know to whom you were telling it?'

"This brought my eyes open.

"'No,' I answered, 'but you asked me——'

"'I know it.'

"There was another long silence. I looked at the woman. She was staring straight ahead. I could not tell from her face whether it was hard or soft. There seemed to be a glint in the eyes that was dangerous, the lines of the mouth seemed drawn and cynical, and yet——

"'And are you sure you did not know to whom you were telling your story?'

"'How should I know?' I asked. 'Why should I care? I am nothing—I have been made nothing through the hard-heartedness of another. Is it right for a girl, if she must go into the world, to know nothing about that world before she ventures into it? I was told nothing, I knew nothing. I had no weapons with which to fight against temptation. I was only a girl, a poor, weak, foolish girl and——'

"I ceased speaking. It seemed that something pearly was beginning to gather in her eyes, that her hands were clasping nervously.

"'Perhaps you did not know,' she began at last, 'what a story you were telling. Suppose I should tell you that I had a little girl to whom I had never shown kindness. Suppose I should tell you that out in the city somewhere is just such a little girl as you were, a little girl that was taken in under the same circumstances and turned out in about the same manner. If I should tell you, what would you say?'

"'What would I say?' I asked, passionately. 'There is much to say——'

"'There is more to do,' came the quick answer. 'Nora,' she called, and the big-hearted Irish girl came into the room. 'I wish you would telephone that lawyer's office and ask if Miss Betty can come out here for a moment. Tell the attorney that I only want to see her.'

"I raised myself hurriedly.

"'Then there is——'

"'A little girl just like yourself,' answered Mrs. Edwards. 'I did with her what your foster mother did with you. But, in my case, it is not too late to remedy. And that remedy is going to be made. She can stay here the rest of her life if she cares to. If she does not she can have half the money her foster father left.'

"Suddenly she bent forward. Her hands covered her eyes.

"'I never thought,' she sobbed. 'I never saw—I never cared!'

"'But you care now,' I said to her and the tenderness in my heart was real. 'You care now, and you are going to make up for the past. That is all that one can do—it is the greatest of human breadth of character and of mind to be able to admit a mistake and to right it.'

"The woman did not seem to hear me. Her hands still covered her eyes.

"'I wonder if she will kiss me when she comes,' she sobbed. 'I wonder if——'

"Real tears were in my eyes now, tears of happiness, tears of real joy at the knowledge that I had even through a trick, brought softness of heart where there was only hardness before.

"'Yes,' I said, and my voice was strangely husky, 'she will kiss you, she will throw her arms around you and call you mother. I'm sure she will.'"

The orchestra across from us was playing by some strange coincidence, the "Melody in 'F'." Miss Clement gazed below into the throbbing lobby, she looked far away down the soft-carpeted promenade, where richly dressed men and women sat listening to the music. And for some strange reason, both of us were silent for a long, long time.

Another of these remarkable true stories of Alice Clement's fine detective work will appear in next week's Ledger. It is called "A Modernized Green Goods Game." Don't miss any of these stories. They are all true.

* * *

The Squire Explained.

We were sitting around the red-hot stove in the lobby of the village tavern and just when a silence had fallen upon the group one man turned to another and asked:

"Squar' Perkins, if you don't mind, I'd like to ask you a question."

The squire didn't say whether he minded or not, but the other went ahead with

"It's about this 'ere high cost of living. Have you figgered out what's the reason for it?"

"I have," was the answer.

"Then I'd like to hear it."

"Did you raise any wheat, corn or oats last year?"

"Noap."

"Any potatoes, beets or carrots?"

"Noap?"

"Any tomatoes, cucumbers or onions?"

"Noap?"

"Didn't raise nothing whatever to eat?"

"Guess I didn't."

"Just ate all you could of what other folks raised?"

"Looks that way."

"And sot around and let your wife take in washing and support you?"

"Why, she likes to wash."

"Well, I've answered your question. You and a hundred thousand lazy loafers like you boosted the cost of living."

I expected to see a row follow, but none came. There was a minute of suspense, and then the questioner yawned and stretched and exclaimed:

"Well, by thunder! I've been puzzling over that matter for more'n a year, and here you have solved it in three minits!

* * *

The Mysterious Handful.

A troupe of wandering musicians were playing before a Swiss hotel. At the end of the performance one of the members left the group, approached the leader of the band and pulled out a little paper box, which he emptied into his left hand while the eyes of the leader followed every movement.

He then took a plate in his right hand, passed it around, and a large sum was collected, every one meanwhile wondering what he held in his left hand.

"Why, it's very simple," said the leader when questioned. "We are all subject to temptation, and to be sure of the fidelity of our collector he has to hold five flies in his left hand, and we count these when he returns, to make sure of the money.

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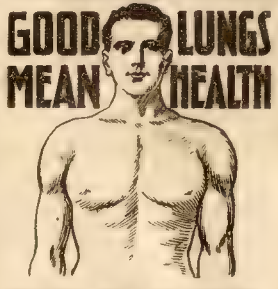
GOOD LUNGS MEAN HEALTH



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A Duel of Wits.

(Continued from page nine.)

And so when the police went to the vacant building, as per instruction from a source unknown to them, to "prevent a duel to the death," as their informant worded it, they found the fracas over, and only a man lying wounded on the floor alone. There was an unopened package lying on the window-sill containing two swords. However, the man had received a flesh wound from a sword thrust, of which he could not—or would not—give an account.

He was hurried to a hospital where his wound was attended to. And then it was discovered that this same James Northcote, alias John Carver, burglar, was plain John Andrews, an old offender of the law, and wanted for several daring robberies in the East.

Whether his assailant could have been discovered or not by the evidence, or the lack of it, even on the famous Bertillon plan, was never known, for the matter was not looked into at all. When the police discovered that this man was John Andrews, they knew that there was enough against him to keep him in State's prison for the rest of his natural life. The authorities were only too glad to get the rascal into their clutches without inquiring about the recent mix-up which had enabled them to get hold of him at last. Estella might even have received the thanks of the police and the notoriety she was seeking to avoid, or her husband was trying to save her from it she had come forward and confessed all.

But it was to Marie Walch that the real crown of bay-leaves belonged; for through her instrumentality the notorious gentleman burglar had been delivered over to the law, though things had gone a little further than she intended. She had meant only to save her employers from harm; but she did not regret bringing about the punishment of the villain who had deceived them all.

"Marie," Estella said, when the household had once more settled down to quiet contentment and conjugal happiness; "you are promoted to the position of friend and companion at a higher salary!"

"Oh, madam!"

"I shall get a new maid at once."

"She may not be so capable as Marie in some ways," laughed Richard.

"I trust I shall not have the same need of one so capable again," Estella answered; "and I shall certainly not get one so personally attractive next time, so that all the gentlemen burglars will——"

"Oh, madam!"

"We'll forget all that, Marie, and see what can be done for you. Ability and brains should not go unrewarded. I have a nice match all thought up for you. You are no longer a servant, and with your beauty and intelligence——"

But Richard was laughing too heartily for her to go on with her matchmaking rhapsody, and Marie had slipped from the room.

Then Richard caught his wife in a strong embrace, and while she sat on his knee with her head on his shoulder he said:

"Do you know I was more afraid to face you after I found that note than I was to meet the man I meant to fight to a finish? That temper you credit yourself with, and the warning you gave me that your love would die if ever your anger was aroused against me, or if once I had said harsh things to you, made me a coward as far as facing you was concerned. I couldn't bear to lose your love, Stella, in that way."

"Ah, dear!" she said softly, her dark eyes glowing with love and happiness, "that temper of mine was above the boiling point; it was seething and raging in a way you could never understand—you, with your comparatively mild temperament. But not against you, Dick—never against you—though I knew all the time that you believed me false."

"But why, dear, were you not angry with me for that?" he asked, in a puzzled tone.

"Because I love you," she whispered. "I could not be angry with you, because I love you, Richard!"

The End.

* * *

Chickens.

Chickens are the most dad-busted, uncertainest creatures that walk, the family acre. Not the kind of chickens this lady who is wearing the O. Henry's kimono—beg pardon, mantle—writes about, but our old, familiar, feathered friends.

Never raised any? Well, you will, all right. Most universal pursuit in this whole wide world, outside of paying the bills. Merchant, banker, broker, farmer, city man, commuter—almost everybody tries to raise chickens at some time or another. Looks easy—that's the deceiving part of it.

And it is easy, after you learn one thing: Little chickens don't know anything, medium-sized chickens don't know anything, big chickens don't know anything. If there is any change of an intellectual nature as the size increases, the big ones know less, if possible, than the little ones.

If there is a wire partition in your pen, with an open door at one end, the chickens will try to plunge through the wire instead of going round and walking through the door. In the course of time, when the birds get heavy, they will hang themselves trying to do this if you don't watch them.

Hen chickens are more valuable than roosters, because they can lay eggs if they will. But if you take a dozen small chickens and raise them carefully, it is always surprising how many of them turn out to be roosters. Sometimes they will sprout tail feathers at the very last minute, just when you are thinking they ought to be ready to lay eggs. At this time you must get busy with the barnyard guillotine, or ax as it is familiarly called.—Puck.

* * *

Nobody Cared.

Henry T. Hunt, the handsome reform mayor of Cincinnati, said, apropos of political corruption, in an address before a women's club:

"When I think of political corruption I am reminded of Chicago in the old days. They do say, you know, that in Chicago in the old days, at every meeting of the board of aldermen, all hands, before the meeting was half over, would be drinking the ink and signing the bills with whisky."

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The Vanished Captain.

(Continued from page three.)

he had had the house raised and some light admitted here—it's a dark hole."

Peter stood swinging the lantern aloft illuminating the obscure corners. The vault was well stocked with a collection of kegs and casks. A small rough table stood on the far side, where two or three little vessels gave evidence that considerable sampling of firewater had gone on.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Virginian, picking up a black, silver-rimmed beaker, and examining it in the uncertain light, "here's a fine old black-jack and some little demijohns! What a sin to keep them down in this dark hole—why, they must be three hundred years old, at least."

"Yes, I have often heard uncle say they were made in Cromwell's time, but he had a fancy that he could better judge of his liquors in them, and so always kept them here for sampling," explained Stamford.

"Why, there's some dregs of"—the old gentleman stopped and sniffed knowingly at the vessel—"of cognac, to be sure, in this one. Didn't the Captain know enough to keep them washed out after his tests; one can never judge of liquors in vessels in which some has been left standing."

"Yes, he was always careful to wash them out," asserted Stamford, taking the demijohn from Mr. Charrington's hand, "but there's some in it all right now. How about that, Peter?"

"Beg pardon, sir, but Hi took a thimbleful meself just a while ago; Hi was that so hupset hover this business just a very thin swallow, sir—the Captain always said as Hi could 'ave a swallow when Hi needed hit—no 'arm, Hi 'ope, sir."

"That's all right," said Stamford, shortly.

"You old rogue!" jocularly cried Mr. Charrington. "But you need not to have confessed it; I smelt it when you came out to meet us just now."

"Yes, sir, just so, sir," mumbled the man, uncomfortably.

"Well, there's nothing down here," continued the Virginian, "nothing but the four walls and the tables and casks and bottles; the Captain is most certainly not down here."

"No, sir, Hi knew 'e wasn't, sir; 'e never left the room after 'e went hup, sir; Hi can swear to that."

"Up you go, then," came the command, and the little search party again ascended.

The kitchen, the small butler's pantry, the Captain's den, the diningroom were all carefully examined, with the same results, the only find being one of the lost Captain's slippers, kicked halfway under the couch on which he had been lying in his den.

"Where's the mate to it?" demanded Mr. Charrington.

"Hi ain't seen hit, sir," denied Peter.

"Perhaps we shall come across it upstairs," suggested Stamford, as he led the way.

Three quarters of an hour was spent in examining the chambers and bathroom. Nothing was discovered, not even the missing slipper.

"Hit's the only thing as his missing," mused the butler, thoughtfully pulling at his long-suffering chin. "Everything else as the Captain 'ad his 'ere, Hi'm mortal certain."

Mr. Charrington's jovial face commenced to look very grave. "It is a most puzzling case," he admitted, almost in an aside. Peter tugged more viciously than ever at his scraggy chin, while the nephew looked almost appealingly at the ex-Judge for help.

"What's the next thing to do?" he inquired. "It seems almost certain he is not here in the house, and almost as certain that he has gone out without any clothes on. Why, he'll freeze to death; he'll die of exposure; we must get help and form a search party. He must have become suddenly insane and wandered away."

"'Ow 'd 'e get hout, Master Stamford?" inquired the butler. "Hi swear 'e never passed me hon the stairs, and 'e couldn't 'ave got hout of the winders and bolted them after 'im, could 'e, sir? And 'e never would 'ave climbed up that chimney."

"No," said the Judge, "he didn't get out through the chimney. Look here, no man his size could do it; it's less than nine inches across," and he measured with his pocket rule.

"What is your candid opinion, then, sir?" demanded the nephew.

"I would prefer not to express one at this stage," cautiously replied Mr. Charrington. "I shall require more light before I can venture an opinion."

"'Ere you har, sir!" cried Peter, thrusting his lantern, which he was still carrying, into the Judge's hand.

"Oh not that kind of a light! I mean, information, data; your master understands what I mean."

"Yes, sir, just so, sir," mumbled Peter, backing away.

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Willis—"I see they captured the automobile robbers."

Gillis—"Chauffeurs or dealers?"

JACK-O'-LANTERNS.

"Going to grandfather's!" exclaimed Ted.

"For Thanksgiving!" shouted Fred.

"And see all the cows and pigs and roosters, and have turkey and chicken pies, and pumpkin pies and Jack-o'-lanterns!" cried Ned.

"What's Jack-o'-lanterns?" asked Fred.

"I never tasted any," said Ted.

It was two years since the family had been to grandfather's, and Ned was the only one of the three who could remember much about it.

"Why they're things made of green pumpkins."

"Pumpkins ain't green; they're yellow," insisted Fred. "I saw some down at market."

"Are Jack-o'-lanterns as good as pies?" asked Fred.

"Oh! You don't eat Jack-o'-lanterns," said Ned.

"What are they good for, then?" asked Fred, a little disappointed.

"Oh, they're to have fun with," said Ned. "Jolly fun! Just wait till you see!"

Some little boys have not any grandfather or grandmother living on a farm. Ned and Fred and Ted knew there were such boys at school, for they had heard them say so. And they pitied them very much.

Once in a great while pumpkin pies were made at home but they never tasted anything like those the boys had for lunch just as soon as they arrived at grandfather's.

"Grandfather," said Ned, as soon as the time had come for asking questions, "are pumpkins yellow or green?"

"Yellow, aren't they, grandfather?" asked Fred

"No, green, aren't they?" asked Ned. "I know I'm right"

"I guess you are both right," said grandfather, smiling. "They are green first, and yellow afterward, when they get ripe enough for pies."

"Then can't we make Jack-o'-lanterns?" asked Ned, in great concern.

"Plenty," said grandfather. "There are always a few in a crop that don't ripen. There's a corner in my cornfield that I'm sure must have been laid out expressly for Jack-o'-lanterns, for it's shady, and lies low, so that the pumpkins never get ripe. We feed them to the cows, but you can pick out all the best ones you want."

Fred thought it a pity to leave poorer ones for the cows that gave such nice milk. But when he saw how keenly they seemed to enjoy the ones which Hiram, the farm-boy, cut up with a hatchet for them, he gave over thinking so. Especially when grandfather said:

"The Jack-o'-lanterns will go to the cows sooner or later."

What a fuss there was in the great old kitchen the next morning! Hannah, the woman who had lived in the family ever since the boys' father was a baby, did the heavy work, but it was pretty, young Aunt Hetty who made all the pies and cakes and other nice things. Ted was much interested in the cooking, and saw some wonderful doings.

Hiram brought in a tremendous armful of dry wood, and opened a little door in a brick wall at the side of the kitchen. Ted peeped in, but it was all dark.

"What's that?" he asked.

"The oven," said Hiram.

And then Hiram began building a fire in it. Ted looked on in dismay for a moment, and then went to find his aunt.

"Aunt Hetty," he said, "he's making a fire right in the oven."

"Yes, dear," she said. "My pies will soon be ready."

"In the oven, Aunt Hetty! We never make a fire in the oven at home."

"No," said Aunt Hetty, laughing. "But we do here."

When Ted went back, Hiram had it piled full of wood, and the fire was blazing and crackling merrily through it. It made Ted feel quite melancholy to think of putting good things in there. But at last the fire burned down to a great bed of glowing coals, and then Hiram came with a great shovel and took them all out of the oven.

Aunt Hetty put her hand into the hot place, and said, "That's right." Then she called Hannah to help her put the things in.

She took an iron thing which looked exactly like the thing they turned buckwheat cakes with at home, only ten times bigger. She laid a pie on the shovel-end of it and Ted watched, expecting to see her turn it over. She did not, however, but gave it a shove into the oven. All the other good things followed, and the oven was shut up.

Ted went out to see what his brothers were doing

"See here," said Fred, eagerly. "We're going to make seven Jack-o'-lanterns, and when the four Dent boys come we're going to have a grand procession 'round the house with them on our heads."

"Who—the Dents?" said Ted, a little puzzled

"No, the Jack-o'-lanterns. Won't it be splendid, though? But it's going to be lots of work. Here, go to scooping, Ted!"

Ned cut a round piece out of the stem-end of a pumpkin, and Ted went to scooping, minding Ned's caution to be very careful and not dig too near the rind. All three worked like beavers, Fred and Ted digging out the centers of the pumpkins until only a thin rind was left. Then Ned would take them and cut eyes, nose and mouth on the green outside.

The last thing was to scoop a little hole in which to set a light.

Aunt Hetty was just taking the pies from the oven as Ted ran in to beg for some candle-ends. And she told him they must all come in, for the company would soon be coming, and she was going to dress, and they must dress too.

But they took time to carry the Jack-o'-lanterns into the barn where it was dark. The candles were lighted, and the eyes glared wildly, and the fearful saw-teeth grinned horribly, and they had a grand procession of three in the barn before they ran shouting with glee into the house.

If there were only room on this page to tell all about the company and the dinner! But you must try and remember all the Thanksgiving dinners you have ever seen, and be sure it was quite as nice as any of them. And if at first the boys were too merry to think of anything else, grandfather's bowed head and earnest words soon brought a thought of the Good Giver who had made every day of a happy young life a Thanksgiving day.

When it was over, Ned winked to the six other boys. Twilight was gathering as they stole quietly out of the house.

"I hid them safely," said Ned. "I wanted it to be a regular surprise. Don't you believe some of the folks'll jump and scream when they look out the windows and see us? Hurry now—hurrah!"

But what did Ned see as he rushed through the stable-yard? Ah, Ned, how came you to forget that the cows always come up through that lane?

In a corner of it, behind a pile of stones, he had carefully hidden the Jack-o'-lanterns.

"Get out there, I say! Whoop! whoop! Quick, Tom—Fred! If those old cows ain't eating up all our Jack-o'-lanterns!"

There was a desperate onset, and Mooley and Brindle and Buttercup and their mates were driven right and left no doubt wondering why they were not allowed to eat their pumpkins in peace

But they had had plenty of time, and only fragments of eyes, noses and mouths lay scattered about.

The boys looked blank for a moment, and then Ted said:

"Never mind, we've had lots of fun today without the procession."

"And we'll make some more Jack-o'-lanterns tomorrow, and that will be all the more fun," said Ned.

"Can we have some more pumpkins, grandfather?" said Fred.

Grandfather, who had come out to see what the fuss was, laughed and said:

"Yes, plenty. It seems to be all the same to cows.

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"It Helped Me So Much."

MRS. F. W. MYERS, of Bodines, Pa., says: "Your 'Favorite Prescription' has done me a wonderful lot of good.

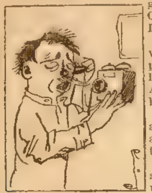
"Seven years ago when our first child was born I was left miserable. I doctored with two physicians without any relief. I then went to see one of the head doctors in Williamsport; he said I must have an operation at once and that I should quit work, but that was something I could not do. I then began taking your 'Favorite Prescription' and it helped me so much. I always suffered so until our last child when I got along nicely. I shall never go through it again without your medidine.

"Will close by wishing you much success in future."

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Trying to Find Himself.

At the recent meeting in Washington of the American Federation of Sex Hygiene, Dr. Raymond G. Trumbauer of Duluth said



"At this meeting we especially oppose gay life—gay life that costs Americans over six billions a year.

"Gay life turns all good things to a wrong use. Even the telephone——"

Dr. Trumbauer smiled and continued:

"The telephone girl at my hotel told me this morning that, at dawn, there had come a call over the house exchange.

"'Hello,' said a man's voice from Room 218, 'is this the Hotel Blanc?'

"'No,' the puzzled girl replied. 'This is the Noir Hotel.'

"'New York or Washington?'

"'Why,' she replied, 'Washington, of course.'

"'Thanks,' the male voice answered. 'Just woke up and didn't know where I was.'"

■

Rare Type of Editor.

Senator Crane was talking about an opponent of arbitration.

"The man is not liberal," he said. "He takes a narrow, selfish view of things. He is not well informed, either. The fact is, he reminds me in his narrowness and ignorance of the editor of the Cinnaminson Scimitar.

"The editor of the Cinnaminson Scimitar, reading the copy of a cub reporter from Yale, came to this sentence:

"'Cæsar not merely met opportunity—he created it.'

"The editor looked up from this sentence and said reproachfully:

"'Look here, what do you want to advertise Cæsar for?'"

■

His Argument.

Mr. Graball was the owner of several dilapidated houses, and the way he dealt with his tenants would have turned Shylock green with envy.

No one knew how it was the houses stood. Report had it that the wall paper held them together; but in one house the paper had come off the walls. As a result the latter bulged dangerously. Forthwith Mr. Graball raised the rent.

"Five shillings more a month!" exclaimed the wretched tenant. "And with these bulging walls?"

"Certainly, madam," said the landlord, blandly. "You have more room, so, of course, you must pay for it!"

■

Only Half Guilty.

Senator Williams, in an address in Yazoo, said of a movement he opposed:

"These men try to apologize for their course, but their apology reminds me of that of the Yazoo office boy.

"A business man, looking up from an important letter he was drafting, said to this boy testily:

"'Don't whistle at your work, Calhoun.'

"'I ain't workin', sir,' Calhoun answered. 'I'm only just whistlin'.'"

A FRIEND'S ADVICE

Something Worth Listening To.

A young Nebr. man was advised by a friend to eat Grape-Nuts because he was all run down from a spell of fever. He tells the story:

"Last spring I had an attack of fever that left me in a very weak condition. I had to quit work; had no appetite, was nervous and discouraged.

"A friend advised me to eat Grape-Nuts, but I paid no attention to him and kept getting worse as time went by.

"I took many kinds of medicine but none of them seemed to help me. My system was completely run down, my blood got out of order from want of proper food, and several very large boils broke out on my neck. I was so weak I could hardly walk.

"One day mother ordered some Grape-Nuts and induced me to eat some. I felt better and that night rested fine. As I continued to use the food every day, I grew stronger steadily and now have regained my former good health. I would not be without Grape-Nuts as I believe it is the most health-giving food in the world." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Social Worries.

Paul Rainey, at one of his private cinematograph exhibitions, spoke of his travels in the wilds of Africa. "The more one travels," he said, "the more tolerant one becomes of the social faux pas. An English duke visiting China is just as ignorant of court etiquette as the Western cowboy. And, if, dining with a certain king in Somaliland, I refuse to swallow the terrible ball of monkey meat and meal that he molds with his fingers at table and thrusts into my mouth, I am committing a great blunder."

"But we are too sensitive, especially we Americans," said Mr. Rainey, "about social blunders. I am reminded of a New York hostess who so worried her butler with instructions as to how he was to address a duchess at the luncheon table that when, quiet, respectful, assiduous, he proffered her a dish of game, he nervously asked:

"'Cold grace, your grouse?'"

■

Taciturn Steve.

A Northern visitor in the South, tells the following story to illustrate the taciturnity of the Southern negro.

He had asked Steve, a typical darky of the region, numerous questions concerning a certain plantation, and to each the negro gave the invariable reply of "Yahs, sah."

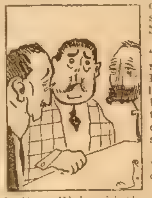
"Steve," asked the somewhat exasperated Northerner, "don't you say anything but 'Yahs, sah'? Can't you say 'No, sir?'"

The negro blinked his eyes indolently for a moment and replied, "Yahs, sah."—Judge.

■

The Disappointed Boss.

Apropos of the temperance leanings of the recent Presidential candidates, Addison Mizner told a story at Sherry's in New York.



"A boss," he said, "was dining two rival candidates. Harmony was highly desirable, and the boss, hoping to establish a harmonious atmosphere, said genially:

"'Boys, what'll we drink with our dinner?'

"'I'll have a—buttermilk,' said the first candidate.

"'Give me a small glass of seltzer and lemon,' said the second.

"The waiter turned to the disappointed boss, whose red, fat face was wrinkled up in a frown.

"'And what's yours, sir?'

"'Gee,' said the boss dismally. 'I guess you'd better bring me an emetic.'"

■

Striking a Bargain.

Charles M. Schwab at a luncheon at Loretto said of a youthful millionaire:

"It's no wonder he has become a millionaire quickly. His readiness at a bargain is wonderful. They tell a story about him and a great captain of industry.

"When, some few years ago, he was struggling along in the insurance business he called on the captain of industry and said:

"Can you spare me a few moments, sir?"

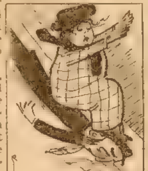
"'Young man,' the captain of industry replied, 'my time is worth $1,000 an hour, but, since you come well introduced, I don't mind giving you thirty minutes.'

"'That's $500,' said the young man. He paused, then added quietly, "I'll save you $250, sir, by just taking a quarter of an hour in cash."

■

Then She Rose.

The boys had made good use of the steep hill in their search for winter sport, and their sleds and bobs had worn a track down the hill, where the snow had turned to ice.



A gentleman, whom we will call Mr. Chesterfield (he was really very polite), collided with a fat woman just at the brow of the hill, lost his footing, and fell; the woman fell also, landing on top of the polite gentleman. And down the hill they went, Mr. Chesterfield forming a toboggan on which the fat lady rode in safety. Faster, faster they went down the icy incline, not stopping until the foot of the hill was reached. Then the fat lady heard a very weak voice saying, "Pardon me, madam; you will have to get off now—this is as far as I go."

A Slight Error.

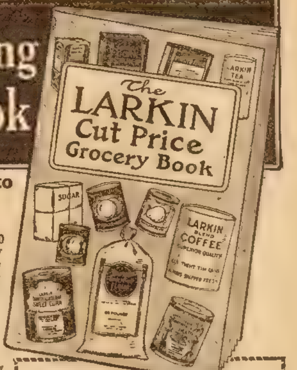
A near-sighted old lady at a dinner party, one evening, had for her companion on the left a very bald-headed old gentleman. While talking to the gentleman at her right she dropped her napkin unconsciously. The bald-headed gentleman, in stooping to pick it up, touched her arm. The old lady turned around, shook her head, and very politely said: "No melon, thank you.

The Auto's Child.

While crossing a city street a farmer was knocked down by an automobile. Before he could get out of the way he was knocked down again by a motorcycle which came rushing along behind.

A friend of his on the sidewalk yelled to him, "Why didn't you get out of the way?"

"How in the dickens did I know it had a colt!" was the angry response.



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"A man in a parlor car looked very worried. Finally, after a lot of fidgeting, he said to the stranger beside him:

"'Pardon me, sir, but I'm worried over a social question, and from your dress and air I see that you could help me out."

"'I'll gladly help you out if I can,' the stranger answered graciously.

"'Well, sir, it's like this," said the worried man. 'I am giving a dinner to the Mayor next week, and I don't know what wines to serve with the various courses. I want the dinner to be very correct, you know. Can you help me?'

"'Why, readily!' the stranger said. 'Nothing easier! The dinner should begin with one, or perhaps two, cocktails. With the oysters serve a pint of dry white wine, per head—say a chablis. With the fish another pint of white wine, a Rhine wine, perhaps, such as Hockheimer. With the roast a pint of good red wine, a delicate Bordeaux, Chateau Mouton Rothschild, say. With the bird and salad and right on through the sweet, a champagne—one quart to a person, a vintage brut—for we must not, you know, seem niggardly. The nuts call, of course, for port—there are lots of good ports. Then, with the coffee, you must serve "fine champagne"—that's brandy—at least seventy-five years old, and liqueurs liberally assorted—Chartreuse, Benedictine, Menthe, marnier, creme d'amour, and so forth and so on.'

"'Thank you, sir,' said the stranger, who had been noting all these drinks down on the backs of envelopes. He now slipped the envelopes in his pocket, looked at his informant with curious and admiring eyes, and said:

"'You are evidently a man of the world, sir. Would you mind giving me your name?'

"'I was just coming to that,' the stranger answered, and he produced from his wallet the card—of a wine merchant!"

* * *

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"'We hear you've been lying down.'"

Infant Snobbery.

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She had visited a little friend whose family did their own housework. She had a very good time, and on coming home was telling her mother all about it

"But, mother dear, they do one very dreadful thing," she concluded. "I hate to tell you about it for it is kind of cruel, and you mightn't let me go again."

"Tell me," urged her mother, in some alarm."

"They use their own grandmother for a cook!" the little girl replied, in a shocked whisper.

* * *

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Our Boys' Corner

Ken Warren, Boy Scout

Or, ADVENTURES IN ALASKA

By William Ressman Andrews

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CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF ICE

"HURRY, come up here and get your clothes dry!" shouted Ken Warren, leader of the Bear Patrol of the Boy Scouts to a tall, thin man.

"All right," called the stranger, as he ran up the bank of the Klondike River to a group of three Boy Scouts, who, at a point two hundred yards away, were building a fire of brushwood. His face beamed with gratitude. "Reckon your promptness in starting a blaze has saved my life," he said, as he held his legs, wet halfway up to the knee, close to the leaping flames.

"Yes, indeed," responded Ken. "People freeze to death in this temperature in less than ten minutes if they get their clothes wet."

The thermometer registered fifty degrees below zero.

"I know how dangerous it is to get wet in Alaska in the winter," said the stranger. "I haven't been here long, but I picked up that bit of useful information. But what beats me is how there can be any water to fall into when the weather is cold enough to freeze up everything. Thought it was all snow and ice. Down at Dawson I was shown holes cut in the thick river ice to get water from. People said that every few days new holes had to be chopped, as the old ones froze up."

"That's true," confirmed Ken.

The stranger looked over the flat, level surface of the river below, then back at Ken with a puzzled air.

"No signs of anybody living hereabouts. No cabins on the shore, nor anything in the way of human habitation," he said. "Who cut the hole I fell into, and why did he do it? That's what I'd like to know. It must have been made a few hours ago, for seems as if there was time for a crust to form and hide it."

"Nobody has been cutting ice holes in this locality," declared Ken. "We're a million miles from nowhere, more or less. No one living here to need a waterhole."

"Then why the deuce did my feet break through the ice in this terrific cold?"

Ken smiled. "I see you haven't been told about these parts," he said, "or you would have been on the lookout——"

"I was careful," interrupted the man. "If I hadn't been, things might have gone worse with me. You noticed I was walking near the shore. That's why I went in only halfway to my knees."

"And that's why you got wet," informed Ken. "Had you been away from the shore you'd have been absolutely safe from such pitfalls. Out in the middle the ice will hold a corps of artillery."

"I don't understand. Slip in a few more pieces of scrollwork so I can get the whole picture," he said in good-natured amazement. Now free from danger through the boys' prompt assistance, he felt buoyant and expressed himself facetiously.

"The ice gave way under your tread because of a peculiarity of the Klondike River," explained Ken. "A number of soda springs pour down its banks, and the alkali not only prevents them from freezing but weakens the ice, as the spring water, working its way to the bottom of the stream, bubbles up toward the top."

The man became grave.

"You don't say!" he exclaimed in astonishment mingled with consternation. "If these springs came to the surface in deep water instead of near the shore, and I had been walking out there"—pointing to the middle of the river—"I would have gone down over my head."

Ken nodded grimly.

"And in that case no fire in the open could have dried your clothes in time—even if by good luck you could have been rescued without delay."

There was a moment's thoughtful silence before the stranger went on.

"That's queer," he said, finally. His tone was half aloud as if unconscious of the others' presence.

"What?" asked Ken, feeling that the man wanted more information about the Klondike's treacherous distinction.

"About Bill," came the slow response.

The three boys glanced at him inquiringly.

"Bill's a chap who's got a rich claim he wants me to see. Said he knew every foot of Alaska. Queer he forgot the springs. But then he drove on ahead so quickly with the dog-sled perhaps it slipped his mind at the moment."

"What did he do that for?"

"I was feeling chilly. He told me to get out and walk for the next mile to get up circulation."

"Then the sled tracks we crossed in the woods just before seeing you are the marks of your outfit?" asked Ken.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you follow them instead of getting close to the river?"

"Bill Monte said I'd better stick to the shore. Wasn't so much danger of getting lost."

"I don't see how you could."

"But Bill said yes. Mentioned a place above here where several trails come together like a spoke of a wheel."

"Oh, I see. That would be confusing."

Ken knew of no trails of that character. But he was also taking his first journey in this part of the country. He had been informed, however, that it was a desolate region seldom traversed at this season. The boys had been warned about the dangerous banks of the Churchill when prospectors at Dawson learned of their destination.

CHAPTER II.

MR. BILL MONTE.

"Hop on our sled," said Ken, pointing to the boys' outfit near-by. "We'll soon overtake your companion."

"That's very kind, but I don't want you to go out of your way. You've done enough for me already. Monte has probably stopped, and is sitting on one of the packs, waiting for me to put in an appearance."

"We won't be losing any time. As a matter of fact, our trail turns here and we will be going your way for some distance."

"Glad to hear that. Where're you bound, may I ask?" inquired the man, as he stepped on the sled and Ken got his team of malamute dogs under way in response to a hoarse shout of "Mush on, you huskies!"

"Ten-Mile Creek."

"You don't say," exclaimed the man. "There's where I'm going to take a look at Bill's claim. Whom do you expect to see there?"

Ken choked back a lump in his throat.

"I—er—hope to see my father," he said, gravely.

"Nothing wrong? He ain't sick, or something like that?"

"Don't know. Mother and I haven't heard from him for nearly two years. He used to write regularly. The letters suddenly ceased. No matter how much we wrote to him there was never a reply."

"That's bad," commented the man, thoughtfully.

"In the last letter, father reported that his mine was rich, and he would soon be making a lot out of it. So many strange things happen in Alaska mother got dreadfully worried. We wrote and wrote, but still no answers. Finally it seemed as if we never would know what had become of him unless I came. She didn't want to let me. I told her it would be all right if some one went with me. Hugh Harper, the corporal of our scout patrol at home in San Francisco, and Job Grant"—nodding in the direction of his two youthful companions—"said they'd come along. All our parents objected at first, but Mr. Damond, our scoutmaster, interceded for us. Everybody who knows him has complete confidence in his judgment. At last we obtained the necessary consent when Mr. Damond said he'd come along, too."

"He's gone ahead of you, I suppose?"

"No; he's back in Dawson sick in bed," responded Job Grant.

"Was taken down with a fever," explained Ken. "We prevailed upon him to allow us to drive out to the mine now. I simply couldn't stand any more suspense."

"And you say your father's claim is at Ten-Mile Creek?"

"Yes, Mr.—Mr.——"

"Whipple—Sam Whipple. Excuse me for forgetting to introduce myself. What's your name, please?"

"Ken Warren."

"Thanks, Ken. Good thing Bill Monte's with us. As owner of a mine in the same locality, he'll know your father and all about him. Do hope Bill will have good news for you." He looked ahead and discerned a short, heavily-set man walking toward them in the trail of Monte's dogs, which Ken had been keeping to with his own team. "Why, say, here comes Bill now. Hello!" he yelled to the man. "What are you doing on the

(Continued on page twenty-one.)

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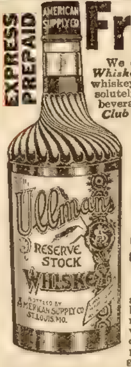

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This popular **"IMPERIAL"** brand is a great favorite with those who prefer to order whiskey in jugs and in wholesale quantities. This high proof, straight whiskey is easily worth $3 a gallon and could not be bought elsewhere for less than that. But to satisfy the popular demand, we have cut the price to **$5 for 2 gallons, express prepaid**, with a still further reduction in larger quantities. Merchants, farmers, planters, dealers or clubs, who expect to distribute a quantity among their friends, will find this whiskey, in our new, up-to-date glass jugs with handles, just what they are looking for. We pack 12 gallon glass jugs or a 20 gallon keg to the sugar barrel, and will tag name on each jug if requested.

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1 Gallon in Glass Jug	$2.60	10 Gallons in Glass Jugs	$ 24.00
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Free With Every Order For 1 Gallon or More

- 1 Bottle Delicious Dixie Cheer
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- 1 Profit Sharing Coupon with each gal.

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- 1 Aluminum Folding Cup
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- 1 Quart Athletic Club Whiskey
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- 1 Quart Delicious Dixie Cheer
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We have made up a special five bottle lot, one full gallon, which we will sell for only 70c a bottle, all express prepaid.

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10 Full Bottles	$ 6.90	25 Full Bottles	$16.50
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Wholesale Prices On Pints

Whiskies and Gins	25 Full Pints	50 Full ½ Pints	100 Full Pints
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Wedding Bell Whiskey	8.00	9 00	31 00
Mascot Whiskey	8.25	9.25	32.00
Ullman's Reserve Stock Whiskey	8.50	9.50	33.00
Ullman's Extra Quality Whiskey	9.50	10.50	37.00
Athletic Club Whiskey	10.00	11.00	39.00
White Corn Whiskey X	7.76	9.00	30.00
White Corn Whiskey XX	8.75	10.00	34.00
White Corn Whiskey XXX	9.75	11.00	38.00
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Gin XX	8 75	10.00	34.00
Gin XXX	9.75	11.00	35.00

DON'T Be Duped!

We want to warn our readers against the misleading claims of certain "Smooth" Mail Order Houses that they are selling whiskey fit to drink at a profit of 10 or 12 cents a gallon. They put up a great "spiel" about "fighting the Whiskey Trust", "forced to close out thousands of barrels", etc., and name a price per gallon that **looks** pretty cheap on the face of it, to any one who doesn't see the bug under the chip. But just raise the chip, men, and watch the "bug"—EXPRESS CHARGES—scamper away like a cockroach in the kitchen sink when the hot water is turned on.

"EXPRESS CHARGES"! Look out!! Whenever any of these Cheap Whiskey Fellows offer you goods as low as $1.67 a gallon, just look for the "bug" and you'll find that YOU are going to pay the express charges. They don't tell you so, of course. Oh, no! That would tip off their hand and show you their game in advance and make the whiskey really cost you about $2.92 per gallon. So just add $1.25 express charges for each gallon, and you'll get the REAL price of this "10 and 12 cent profit" stuff. You really pay a BIG price for it and the quality would gag a cigar store Indian. For doesn't it stand to reason that any concern that would try to "slip one over on you" in this matter of express charges, would just naturally try to beat you on the quality of their goods?

Now drive a nail right here! We **prepay all express charges** on every drop of our goods. And that means a big saving to our customers, because our enormous business enables us to secure a very special low express rate that these little "10 and 12 cent profit" fellows couldn't possibly get on the limited business they do. **Don't be duped!** Always watch the express charges.

Special Offer No. 4

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444
FINE OLD WHISKEY
AMERICAN SUPPLY CO.

BOTTLED IN BOND

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444 Bottled In Bond

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444 IN FULL PINTS

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444 IN FULL HALF PINTS

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8 Full Quarts of Finest Liquors At a Saving to You of $2.10

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MY NAME IS ....

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Ken Warren, Boy Scout.

(Continued from page nineteen.)

back trail? Thought I had fallen by the wayside, and you got worried?"

The man had been gazing intently at the approaching team. If any one had been near him his face would have been a study in changing emotions. First there was a look of surprise. Then his eyes glowed with baffled rage. As the sled came nearer he gazed at it with a puzzled air. And finally when he recognized the voice shouting his name he went pale with fear. But he recovered his composure before the occupants of the sled reached him.

"Hello, yourself, Sam," he cried, with an assumed cheerfulness. "You did seem to be taking a long time to catch up. Wanted to see if you needed a lift. Didn't seem possible you weren't able to walk a mile."

The dog team was brought to a stop, and Ken got a view of the man's features. His nose was hooked like a bird of prey; the eyes were beady black and shifty in their gaze. The scout leader didn't like him and felt that Mr. Whipple had fallen in with a man who, if not actually dangerous, was very unscrupulous. Still, the young fellow thought it unfair to condemn any one solely by his looks if they were not prepossessing. He tried to suspend judgment.

"A little more, and I wouldn't have been able to walk a yard," went on Whipple. "If it hadn't been for these lads I'd have been a corpse by this time."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Monte in surprise. "How's that?"

Ken thought he detected a note of anxious curiosity in his tone.

"The ice along the river gave way and let me in," said Whipple. "If they hadn't been on the spot in the nick of time I'd been a dead one for sure."

"Well, well, that was an experience!" said Monte.

"Yes; and they knew just what to do in such an emergency," declared Whipple in admiration of his young friends' help. "They had a brush heap blazing in no time, and I dried my legs before the water had a chance to penetrate where it would do serious damage."

"A fortunate escape."

Monte came forward with extended arm and shook hands with Ken, Hugh, and Job.

"To whom are we indebted for this timely rescue?" he asked.

Sam Whipple spoke up and introduced them. The moment Monte heard Ken's name, his swarthy, sun-exposed skin went a shade paler. The change escaped notice except in the case of the patrol leader. He saw that the man acted as if he was familiar with the name and felt alarmed over something. Young Warren was puzzled, particularly when Monte scanned his face with an unusually keen glance. The man showed that he felt convinced of some likeness between Ken and some one else. All this occurred in a few moments. Monte's features had been kept in wonderful control, only the slight changes of color noticeable to Ken betraying an undue emotion.

"Where are you going?" asked Monte. "I see you're taking the same trail. Prospecting?"

Whipple spoke before Ken could answer.

"Same place you and I are bound, Bill," he said, quickly. "He's on the hunt for his father. Tells me he had a rich claim on Ten-Mile Creek. I said you knew everybody there, and probably would be able to give him some information. Do you know a miner by the name of Warren?"

Every eye was on Monte, every heart waited anxiously for his answer. It meant everything to Ken, and to his two companions for his sake. It seemed as if at last some light was about to be shed on the mystery of Mr. Warren's strange silence.

"No, I don't," came the disappointing reply.

The answer was unexpected. It seemed strange that in a little-settled district like Ten-Mile Creek the miners were not acquainted with one another. Monte noticed a look of incredulity on their faces, and hastened to explain further.

"I heard of a man by that name, but didn't know him personally," he said.

Though not what they wanted to know, it was more comforting than his first reply, and seemed to hold out the prospect of some definite information.

Ken grasped at the second answer with avidity, though his mistrust of the man prevented him from taking everything he might say on faith.

"Is he alive?" was the first question occurring to the scout leader.

His friends hung on the reply with open mouths, while Ken's heart beat like a trip-hammer.

Monte shot him a penetrating glance. It might have been to help him decide on an answer he thought best suited to the occasion. Ken suddenly fancied that he could inform him correctly if he wanted to. But would he?

"Yes, he is," said Monte.

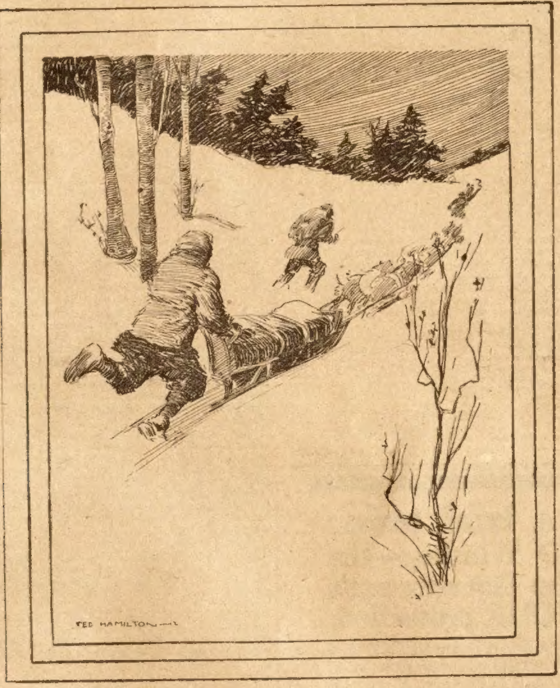
It came like an afterthought, Ken imagined. He felt sure he noticed a flitting expression indicating an impulse to say, "I don't know." How could this be reconciled with what the man actually said? Did it mean that a sudden plan coming into his head made him feel that this reply would fit admirably with some hastily formed resolution? Whether he had learned the truth or not, Ken was anxious to hear what Monte had to say.

"Alive!" he repeated, though with an effort to make it appear that he believed the man's words. "What more do you know?"

"He ain't on his claim," Monte answered, with a speculative glance at his questioner. "If I remember hearing right, he sold out some time ago and left the country."

"And nobody knows where he went?" asked Whipple.

Ken felt incapable of opening his mouth for a few seconds, and just look-



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ed at Monte. The words carried with them a shock of disappointment; yet he wondered if they were true after all.

"No one I ever talked with," returned Monte, slowly.

"How long ago did he leave?" asked Ken.

Monte shifted one foot uneasily before the other, and acted as if he wished the questioning would cease.

"About six months, I think," he ventured, grudgingly. "You see, I only know by hearsay. Afraid I ain't in a position to answer all the questions I'd like to."

"Sorry you can't tell the lad more," declared Whipple, taking his companion's denials at his own valuation. He was a good-hearted man and, aside from promptings of gratitude, was anxious to help Ken in his search. "Never mind, lad, just wait till we get to the Creek. Somebody's sure to know more about your father."

Ken felt grateful for Whipple's attempt to bolster up his feelings, and thanked him.

"Well, the sooner we get there the quicker you'll find out," said Hugh. "Let's start."

Every one fell to and examined the harness of the dog-team, and looked the load over to see if it was strapped firmly to the sled.

"All right," cried Job. "Start off."

Ken looked around and saw that everybody was tucked in under lynx robes, waiting for him to give the signal. He cracked his long whip. It snapped in the cold, electrified air like the crackle of a wireless receiver.

"Mush! mush!" he yelled.

The leader, a dog on the Scotch collie order, jumped up and sprang forward. The others, malamutes, the Arctic dogs used for drawing sleds by the Eskimos long before Europeans ever set foot in the country, followed, baying loudly in sheer enjoyment of the run. They had got chilled a little during the halt, and welcomed the chance to be off again. The trail skirted the woods fringing the shore, fifty rods or more away.

The speed made by the dogs was all right as long as the collie kept on his feet. He was able to for practically all of the distance to the spot where Monte had left his outfit and walked back in search of Whipple. But at the sight of Monte's animals he became excited over the prospect of company. The new collie gave a joyous yelp, and Ken's leader bounded forth to meet him. The rear part of the steel runner hit a hummock of ice projecting from the trail.

The sleds are so narrow and long, measuring about eighteen inches by eight feet, that to remain upright they must glide on a pretty flat surface. Ken's sled toppled over in the snow, spilling everybody. Whipple struck his head on a jagged piece of ice and lay stunned. As he fell he made an instinctive movement which Ken noticed had a peculiar effect on Monte's features. As the wounded man put one hand to the injured spot, the other flew in a protecting way to his waist. The lad thought of a money belt when he saw the act excite an unconscious avaricious gleam in Monte's beady eyes. Then his thoughts flew back to Whipple's experience on the icy banks of the Churchill. Something flashed through his mind that seemed to connect the two incidents. If what he now suspected in a vague way were true, Monte was a dangerous, unscrupulous man capable of doing anything.

The lad pulled a tight rein on his thoughts. "Here, this won't do," he vowed to himself. "I mustn't let a vivid imagination make out a man a would-be murderer unless there's some tangible proof."

The other two youths rushed to Whipple's assistance. They picked him up and placed him back on the sled, while Ken, after quieting the dogs, took out his scouts' first-aid-to-the-injured kit. While opening it he looked critically at the victim. He was only stunned, and Ken knew that some simple remedy would soon restore him to consciousness. He realized, too, that he had to be careful about administering any liquid while out in the open with the thermometer so low.

He rummaged in the medicine box without heeding the others. Suddenly a shadow fell across the snow at his side. He glanced up quickly. He saw Monte with an object in his hand that acted with startling effect on the scout leader.

"Drop that! You'll kill instead of bring him to, if he gets a dose of that in this severe temperature," he yelled excitedly, grabbing a whisky flask from Monte.

A venomous gleam, like that of a foiled snake, appeared for a second in the man's eyes.

"What's the matter?" inquired Monte, inscrutably.

"Matter enough; and you ought to know, if you're familiar with this climate," said Ken, pointedly.

Monte seemed quite innocent of the other's meaning. "I'm a sourdough, having lived here some time," he responded, calmly, "but I don't know what you're driving at. Don't you see I want to get Whipple on his feet again?"

"I haven't been in Alaska long enough to be called a sourdough," said Ken, with some heat; "but I have learned the treacherous effects of whisky in this weather when a person is outside." He swiftly drew out a smelling mixture and applied it to Whipple's nostrils.

"I've taken a drink of red-eye at all times and in all seasons up here, without having any but good results," declared Monte, with an offensive smile.

"Mean to say you never heard of its turning to a lump of ice in the stomach, bringing on terrible pains that often result in death?"

"Naw, never heard of such a thing," denied Monte.

There was no use of arguing with him. He was lying to get out of the predicament, and Ken, sure of the information he had got from more than one man during his brief stay in the country, knew it.

It hardly seemed possible that Monte could have tried to administer the whisky in ignorance of its effects. Of course, there was the chance that he didn't know. In that case, he must be a newcomer as strange to the peculiarities of Alaskan climate as the veriest outsider. To admit this resulted in only one inference—he wasn't what he represented himself to be. That is always suspicious in itself, whether a man is a "bad lot," or is sailing under false colors for some harmless purpose known only to himself.

"You need close watching," mentally vowed Ken, as he came to these conclusions.

CHAPTER III.

AN INTERRUPTED JOURNEY.

"How far are we from your claim?" asked Whipple, after Ken's assistance had brought him around.

"Not so very far off; two days' journey," said Monte.

His companion looked at him in surprise.

"Thought you said we'd get there today?"

"You must have misunderstood me," replied Monte. "Might have sounded like that, but didn't mean it."

Ken had been told in Dawson that if the weather was very favorable the distance could be covered in twenty-four hours. He was anxious to go on, not caring to sleep under a tent, in such intense cold if there was a chance of spending the night in a cabin heated with a big barrel stove capable of holding a dozen good-sized logs at a time. He told Monte his desires.

"Well," said the man, "that's just what you can do, and without being obliged to wear out the dogs, trying to reach Ten-Mile today."

"How?" asked Ken. "Didn't know of any roadhouses on the route."

He and the boys had stopped in a typical "halfway house" only a short time before going into Dawson. It was built of logs, the roof spanned with spruce beams fifty feet in each direction. Thirty bunks were arranged like the berths for immigrants in the steerage of ocean liners. But they were all bare of bed clothing. Each traveler accepting accommodations carried his own blankets and robes. Although three stoves were kept filled with fuel night and day, the walls of the cabin were encrusted with hoar-frost. Three large oil lamps furnished plenty of light, enough for Ken and the boys to read by if they had cared to. But after a hearty supper of caribou, canned salmon, coffee, and evaporated potatoes, they preferred to listen to the twenty other occupants, who gossiped about mining and the lucky strikes miners they knew had made from time to time. In asking the question, Ken had visions of the comfort offered by one of these places.

"Ain't no roadhouse," was the disappointing answer. "But a few miles beyond is a deserted miner's cabin. It's all right. You'll find bunks, a stove in good condition—everything but provisions."

It didn't matter about the absence of the latter, as the lads had an abundant supply on the sled, and for that matter, Monte's outfit seemed to be made up of packages containing food. Indeed, he had more provisions than were needed for a journey from Dawson to the mine and back. If Whipple had known more about Alaskan traveling when he started out with his companion to inspect the property he contemplated buying, he would have seen that Monte carried enough food to last an overland journey of several hundred miles. And he would have wondered why his guide considered such a stock necessary—if the man had expected to return immediately to their staring-place.

Ken felt willing to stop in the hut for the night, if they were compelled to. But he was anxious to get to Ten-Mile as soon as possible, and come in contact with some one who could satisfy his longing to get definite information about his father. But he was prevailed upon to desist from trying to make the trip without a stop.

"At best you'll get in camp so late nobody will feel like sitting up to talk," said Whipple, who was convinced by Monte's smooth way of presenting the matter that it was advisable not to hurry.

Hugh and Job were also influenced by Whipple's assumption that Monte was right. So Ken gave in, though against his feelings. And later when the cabin was sighted, something about its appearance and surroundings cast a spell of gloom over him, making the lad feel more than ever like continuing the journey.

It was hidden from the trail in a thick grove of spruce. A path had been made from the trail to the structure in a way that attracted Ken's attention at once. Branches of trees had been lopped off, and saplings cut down to afford a clear view of the trail in both directions for half a mile; yet it was invisible from the road. Any one could step from the cabin and use the cleared space as a kind of lookout to espy, without being observed, whoever might be passing along the trail.

Monte approached it with the air of one who knew his ground thoroughly; and no one else in the party was aware of the hut's grewsome history. It had been the scene of several terrible tragedies the winter before. The occupants of the place had watched for travelers, and the moment a miner was seen in the distance, he was lured to the cabin, robbed, and murdered. The two men responsible for the crimes were so crafty that they escaped suspicion for quite a while. In the depth of night strange sounds could be heard about the hut. People said that they were the cries of the murderers' victims.

If Ken had been told of its uncanny reputation, he could easily have accounted for the strange feeling assailing him. At any rate, its depressing effect made him alert, and was the means of saving his life.

Monte pushed open the door and the others followed. A line of double bunks was on either side. Two shelves, ma of five saplings equaling the width

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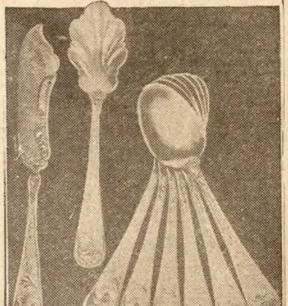

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an ordinary board generally used for this purpose, were nailed to the rear wall, and had held the former occupants' lamp, coffee-pot, sewing basket, revolver, cartridges, sugar, tea, and other articles. The gloomy interior was lighted by a window of common sight in the Alaskan gold-fields, but never seen elsewhere. Ale and beer bottles filled a square opening cut in the rear wall. They had been packed sideways, with the ends facing the inside of the hut. An iron Yukon stove, built especially to suit the needs of the climate, was still standing in good condition in the middle of the room.

"Well, here we are, as fit as a fiddle. Look at the stove. Good as new and ready for our use!" exclaimed Monte, with an enforced cheerfulness inspired by the dismal expression of Ken. The man for his own private reasons wanted to keep the lad from brooding. Too much thinking would leave the youth—and the rest, for that matter—in a state of mind more apt to take alarm. So he tried to direct their minds toward pleasant things. He knew that a person was then less on his guard against treachery.

His assumed liveliness infected Whipple to a considerable degree. "I'll take an ax and chop some wood for it," he cried.

Supper was prepared by Monte, who set himself out with sudden vigor to make everybody feel comfortable. He opened the provisions on his sled with a lavish hand, even adding two large tins of canned peaches for dessert. But he made no coffee, as Ken expected he would. Instead, he began busying himself in the preparation of cocoa, a beverage, that while nourishing, makes one feel more or less drowsy. If taken in large quantities—as one would be apt to do, the air so sharpens the appetite in the North—it would produce quite a heavy sleep. Monte drank sparingly of the beverage, and though hungry like the rest from exposure to the keen atmosphere ate very little of the viands he temptingly cooked for the others.

Whipple slapped him on the back good-naturedly. "What's the trouble, old sport?" he exclaimed. "Shouldn't get off your feed. Oh, I see," banteringly, "what's the matter. Don't care to spoil your appetite for twenty-dollar-a-bottle champagne in Dawson after I buy your mine."

Monte smiled with a feeble attempt to appreciate the joke. But Ken noticed the involuntary hardening of the muscles around his mouth right afterward, as if Monte's thoughts were anxious to get back to some subject of other interest.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

⁂

Absent-Minded Couple.

From up-State in Connecticut comes the tale of an absent-minded young couple. There have been more absent-minded folks doubtless, but they have gone about singly, and the Simkins are a model young married couple. It is also a matter of dispute between all the Simkins in-laws as to whether she is more absent-mided than he or he is more absent-minded than she. And nobody can understand how they can get along.

One snowy day last February the country house community of which the Simkins are a part was amazed to see the elder Mrs. Simkins dash by in her motor car at breakneck speed. A few minutes later the engineer of the New York special was equally amazed to find himself being flagged at Pug Lane crossing—a thing that hadn't happened for years. The elder Mrs. Simkins and her chauffeur came panting aboard the train and made their way rapidly through the parlor cars. At the end of the last one they discovered young Mr. and Mrs. Simkins comfortably ensconced with their respective feet on two alligator bags, a new steamer rug alongside, and eating peacefully from a box of chocolates while they laughed at the jokes in a funny paper.

They looked mildly surprised as the elder Mrs. Simkins rushed toward them while all in the car gasped and listened. In one hand she was waving a letter:

"What does this mean?" she cried. "What does this mean? You're going to Florida unexpectedly on a little vacation, are you?"

"Why, yes," explained young Simkins.

"And you know," said young Mrs. Simkins, passing the chocolates, "that we always like to do things unexpectedly."

"Yes, I know," said the elder Mrs. Simkins with meaning, "but tell me this. Have you or have you not sent out cards of invitation to twenty people for a dinner tomorrow evening?"

"Why so we have!" said young Mr. and Mrs. Simkins in amazed and smiling recollection. And imperturbably collecting their effects, they followed the elder Mrs. Simkins from the train.

⁂

A Dangerous Dish.

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Bodi-Tone is not a patent medicine, for its ingredients are not a secret. It contains Iron Phosphate, Gentian, Lithia, Chinese Rhubarb, Peruvian Bark, Nux Vomica, Oregon Grape Root, Cascara, Capsicum, Sarsaparilla and Golden Seal. Such ingredients guarantee its merit.

Natural Curatives To Make Natural Health

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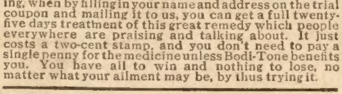
Why remain in ill-health month after month, why allow your body to make you a slave to ills, humours, distress and discomforts, when it is so easy to procure a trial box of this home treatment which has restored thousands to vigorous health and glorious strength? Why delay another day, when a trial of this proven medicine is yours for the asking? Why keep on suffering, when by filling in your name and address on the trial coupon and mailing it to us, you can get a full twenty-five days treatment of this great remedy which people everywhere are praising and talking about. It just costs a two-cent stamp, and you don't need to pay a single penny for the medicine unless Bodi-Tone benefits you. You have all to win and nothing to lose, no matter what your ailment may be, by thus trying it.

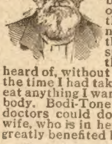
Thousands of Cures

of Rheumatism, Stomach Trouble, Kidney, Liver and Bladder Ailments, Uric Acid Diseases, Female Troubles, Bowel, Blood and Skin Affections, Dropsy, Piles, Catarrh, Anaemia, Sleeplessness, LaGrippe, Pains, General Weakness and Nervous Break-down, have fully proven the power and great remedial value of Bodi-Tone in such disorders. Each one got a dollar box on trial, *as we offer to you in this coupon.*



Its history of success has proven beyond a shadow of doubt how the Bodi-Tone plan of *toning all the body* is a right plan that helps to *cure* these and other disorders, that it is *a real aid to nature*. Many who had for years been in poor health and had tried good doctors and most all of the prominent medicines, have found that *one single box of Bodi-Tone* did more good than *all* other treatments combined. It goes to the root in the body and cures because its work is rational and thorough, the only kind that makes cures permanent. Read the reports, showing how Bodi-Tone makes new health and strength, send for a box on trial at our risk and see if it will not prove the *right thing* for you.

Did More for Him Than Three Specialists.



CARTERS, GA.—I have been diseased for the last fifteen years with what the doctors called Catarrh of the Head, or Systemic Catarrh. Some called it one thing and some another. I had pains all through my body, in my Bowels, Stomach and Back, and my Heart would flutter and beat and smother so it appeared that I could not live. I had Indigestion and Constipation, with blind spells. Everything I ate soured on my stomach before I would get through eating. It seemed that I could not stand it much longer. I tried all the doctors in my settlement and three specialists of Atlanta, Ga., and most of the patent medicines and drugs that I heard of, without any relief, until I got Bodi-Tone. By the time I had taken a treatment of Bodi-Tone I could eat anything I wanted, and there was not a pain in my body. Bodi-Tone has done more for me than all the doctors could do. I am seventy-five years old. My wife, who is in her seventy-fourth year, has also been greatly benefited by its use. J. F. PETTY.

Free From Pain at Eighty-One Years

GLEN ROSE, TEXAS.—I have been in poor health for thirty years, and at times it seemed I was afflicted with most every trouble flesh is heir to. I had Catarrh of the Head, Asthma, Stomach Trouble. My Liver was bad and Kidneys and Bladder were deranged. At times I would lay in a cold sweat for hours with Bilious Colic. I suffered in this way until a year ago, when I saw the Bodi-Tone trial offer, sent for a box and began to take it. I am now in my eighty-first year, and have been altogether free from pain and any distress since I took the first few boxes. Everybody speaks about how well I have been this year, and all realize the great good Bodi-Tone has been to me. MRS. E. RAMFIELD.

Doctor Said He Had Bright's Disease

DANA, IND.—I doctored for four years for Bowel, Stomach Trouble and Rheumatism and gradually grew worse. One doctor told me at last that I had Bright's Disease and could not be cured; then I went to a specialist at Indianapolis. He doctored me for a long time and finally told me to go to the Springs at Martinsville, Ind. I did so and stayed there for some time, but no cure. I commenced taking Bodi-Tone ten months ago and went to work four days after I commenced its use. I am well now and weigh 210 pounds, for I am a large-boned man. I believe that I would have been under the ground if I had not taken Bodi-Tone. G. M. HILL.

A Girl's Case of Extreme Nervousness

LASCASSAS, TENN.—Bodi-Tone has helped me more than anything I have taken. Since using it I seem like a different girl entirely. So many people say "What have you been doing for yourself, you look so much better!" I couldn't do hardly anything before taking Bodi-Tone. Life was a worry and a dread, now it is worth living. I was so nervous I could hardly sleep at night. My head and back would jerk so we feared I had St. Vitus dance. I had our family Doctor, and I took a lot of medicine. Mother saw the Bodi-Tone advertisement and the offer seemed so fair we could not help having faith in it, so sent for a box. Bodi-Tone has done the work for me as all here know. I shall always praise it. EULA DILLON.

Trial Coupon

Clipped from Chicago Ledger.

Bodi-Tone Company,
Hoyne & North Aves., Chicago.

I have read your offer of a dollar box of Bodi-Tone on 25 days' trial and ask you to send me a box by return mail, postpaid. I will give it a fair trial and will send you $1.00 promptly when I am sure it has benefited me. If it does not help me I will not pay one penny and will owe you nothing. Neither I nor any member of my family have ever used it.

Name ______________________

Town ______________________

State ______________________

Street or R. F. D. ______________________

Husband and Wife Trial Offer When this trial offer is read in a home where husband and wife are both ailing and need Bodi-Tone, we will send TWO BOXES on trial, with the understanding that each will use a box, and pay us $1.00 each if benefited. In such cases this Coupon should be signed with the husband's name, followed by the words "and wife." Write name in this way and we will know *two boxes are wanted for husband and wife*, the only way we ever send two boxes on trial.

Your Own Opinion Decides! ***When you use Bodi-Tone on this trial offer you take absolutely no obligations to pay one penny unless it satisfies, nor to buy any medicine at any time. We leave it all to you--your opinion decides it. You will know if you feel better, if you are stronger, more vigorous and active, if your limbs and back do not pain you, if your stomach or kidneys do not trouble you, if your heart or liver does not bother you. You will surely know if your organs are acting better than they did before using Bodi-Tone, and if health is returning. IF YOU ARE NOT SURE, DON'T PAY.***